

LORD SIVA'S MIRACLES

(Madurai Thiruvilaiyadal)

Dr. P. GOPALAN

*Lecturer in Tamil
Government Arts College
Udumalpet 642 126*

Lakshmi Pathippagam

**374-V.G.R.Puram, Alagesan Road
Saibaba Mission Post
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PREFACE

DR.K. KALAAMANI, M.A., Ph.D.,

*Sr. Lecturer in English, Department of English
Bharathidasan University,
Palkalaiperur, Tiruchirapalli - 620 024.*

Siva's Miracles is a refreshingly new endeavour by Dr.P. Gopalan who has recreated the sixty - four miracles of the games of Lord Siva from the Tamil Thriuvilaiyadal. The stories are narrated in an easy style, the puranic style, so much so that it is readily acceptable to the common man. The historic accounts of the various 'leelas' carried out by Lord Siva is brought out with lucidity and simplicity that not only an Indian audience, but any foreign reader will find it most palatable. The leelas of the Lord are believed to have been narrated to sage Agastya by Lord Subramanya and by the sage Agastya to other sages. The stories relate how Lord Somasundareswara of Madurai city as its presiding deity has chosen to reside in this city. The author brings out succinctly how this city was formed by His dictates, His guidance and his grace; and how the city thus became not only sacred, but sweet - its name stemming from the word 'Maduram'. The book traces

how she was given in marriage to Shiva and the various Leelas that the lord performed in order to please his consort which gave rise to the birth of river Valkai. That the Lotus Temple is one of the revered spots in the Temple history is duly established with the various episodes that take place on its shore and with the confluence of the seven sacred seas in it.

The Banabhadra incident and the episodes that inform the founding of the sangam of Tamil poets at Madurai are illustrative of the greatness of the Lord Somasundareswara. There are also events that inform the infinite and abounding compassion in the heart of the greatest of the great as portrayed in His Love for even the animals like the sow or the small chirping sparrow - he who can become a warrior and win battles against evil forces can also become a nestling or a sow and mother the young ones. Such is the compassion of the Lord that rules over the city of Madurai. The task that the author has chosen is commendable. To perpetuate Tamil literature to a wider audience, crossing the regional, linguistic and cultural barriers is a laudable enterprise and the writing is successful. May Lord Somasundareswara, bless him in all his future attempts and may there be many more fruitful attempts in such scholarly pursuits.

K. KALAAMANI

FOREWORD

In Tamil, 'puranam' means ancient history or account. In Sanskrit, there are eighteen Mahapuranas and Twenty nine Upapurnas. The Mahapuranas were written by Veda Vyasara. In Tamil, Nine Puranas are considered to be famous. They are : Kandapuranam, Periyapuranam, Thiruvilaiyadalpuranam, Kōil puranam, Sethupuranam, Sikalathipuranam, Kanchipuranam, Thanigaipuram and Kurralapuranam. Of these, the first three are the most popular.

Kandapuranam was written by Kachiappa Sivachariar and it deals with the emergence and exploits of Lord Kandan. Periapuranam was written by Sekkizhar and it recounts the lives of sixty three individual saints and the qualities of the groups of saints. Thiruvilaiyadal purnam was first written by Perumparrappuliyur Nambi and later by Paranjothi Munivar. Paranjothi was born at Vetharaniam and an Athi Saiva. He was a Thambiran in a Maduraimutt. He was well versed in Sanskrit and Tamil. His knowledge of Ahama Sastras was profound. He translated Vedharaniamanmiam in Tamil and called it Vedarania puranam.

He composed the miracles of Siva in his famous work Thiruvilaiyadal, which contains 3 cantos comprising 64 padalams and 3363 stanzas.

Lord Linga form in this shrine is the first of its kind having been in existence even before the sacred Lingas in all other places come into being. Hence it is called Moolalinga and its worship confers all blessings, including the expiation of all sins and the attainment of Moksha.

Having thus expounded the three kinds of greatness of the kshetra, (Sthala, Theertha and Moorthy) Agastya proceeded to describe the sixty four miracles of the Lord of Madurai.

Naradha Maharishi and Vyasa Maharishi, when approached, said that Agastya Maharishi was eminently suited to enlighten them in the matter as he had imbibed all knowledge from Lord Subramanya. Agastya acquiesced saying that Lord Siva once gave a discourse to Parvathi Sankara Samhita about all Saivite Shrines and that Lord Subramanya who was seated in his Mother's lap also heard the discourse which he later narrated it to him.

According to the Sankara Samhita, Agastya said, Haksya Kshetra would answer to the description of the most meritorious Saivite Kshetra. In the first place, Lord Shiva himself once ruled the Pandya kingdom from its capital Madurai, a well planned and well-built city. The Lord created the Kshetra before all other and the mere mention of its name would confer all benefits including Moksha. In the second place, the tank in the Kshetra which is called Golden Lotus tank was similarly created by the Lord, missing. His abhisheka even before the rivers like Ganga, Cauvery, etc., came into being. For

this reason, it was also called 'Adhi Theertha' Parama Thimbu (superior to all others) 'Siva Theertha' (as it confers unalloyed happiness on those who bathe in it). Gnana Theertha" (as it confers Gnana) and Moksha theertha (as it confers Moksha). It is also called Siva Ganga as the Lord sprinkled Ganges water from his head on this tank.

The city of Madurai in South India is an important pilgrim centre for Hindus all over India. The shrine of Lord Siva there is very famous and the place is considered to be Bhooloka Kailasam. The presiding deities are Goddess Meenakshi and Lord Somasundareswara. The Kshetra is called Hatasya Kshetra. Lord Somasundareswara is credited for having performed sixty four leelas which are described in the Halasya Mahatmya Puranam (in sanskrit) and Thiruvilaiyadal puranam (in Tamil).

The Leelas of the Lord are believed to have been narrated to sage Agastya by Lord Subramanya and by the sage Agastya to other sages in the circumstances mentioned below.

Sage Sootha, well known disciple of sage Vyasa and the exponent of the eighteen Mahapuranam, distributed to sage Vyasa, was once seated in the thousand pillared Mandapa on Mount Kailasa, the abode of Lord siva. Then Sadanata and several other sages approached sage Sootha and enquired him about the most meritorious Siva Kshetra with reference to the merits of Sthala, Theertha and the boon-giving qualities

when Brahma performed Aswamedha yaga in Varanasi, many Rishis assembled there and the same question was raised then.

Another 'Thiruvilaiyadal' by Perumpatra Pulliyurar of Sellinagar alias Vembathurar Thiruvilaiyadal is to be rendering of the Sanskrit Uttara Mahapuramam is more ancient and valuable. Between Paranjothi's and this work, there are many differences in the order and treatment of the various divine sports. Pandit Swaminatha Ayyer had published it with introduction, lexicon and appendices and places the author Perumpatra Puliur in the 12th century. Potri-kali-venba which gives the essence of his puranam and Mathurai-Pathirru-Patthu-Anthathi are his other compositions.

The puranam of Paranjothi Munivar is more popular in Tamil. In this work I have tried to portray a brief account of the contents of each chapter in order to make known to the Non-Tamils and foreigners too. Following are the gist of the miracles are serialised in this book.

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out this small monograph on Siva's Miracles in English and I hope this small book will give to its readers an account of our travail of mind and heart our hopes and aspirations.

At the end of the book, thematic venbas of Thiruvilaiyadal are annexed. These were originally written by Thiru A. Sankaralingam Pillai and published in the monthly 'Gnanabodhini' from August 1900 to August 1901. Every thematic venbas points out each miracle of Lord Siva briefly. I hope this will be very much useful to the Tamil reading public and religious minded people.

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Dr. P. Gopalan

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1. LORD SIVA AS A REDEEMER OF INDIRA

Once Indira was engrossed in witnessing the performance of the Apsaras, the classical dancers. His Guru, Brahuspathi, arrived there but Indira failed to receive him and do obeisance to him befitting the occasion. Brahuspathi got annoyed and walked away. Consequently, Indira's prosperity dwindled. Afterwards he searched for his Guru but he could't find. He had consulted Brahma, who suggested that Indira should take another Guru till the return of his erstwhile Guru. Brahma had also suggested the name of the three headed Vichravas who was an Asura by birth but was a scholar of unexceptional erudition and reputation. Indira had acted accordingly. When Indira wanted to perform a yaga, his newly found Guru showed his real leanings towards the Asuras and performed the yaga which only resulted in the prosperity of the Asuras. Indira was furious at this deceit and he cut off the three heads of his Guru. Brahmahathi Dosha seized Indira immediately. This he passed on to the trees, earth, women and water and thus became absolved of the sin.

But, Thwashta, the father of Vichravas, was grief-stricken on the murder of his son. He therefore performed a yaga from which vratrasura, a demon, emanated. Thwashta put the demon on a mission to kill, Indira in a battle. Vratrasura's challenge was accepted by Indira. But in the battle he could not withstand the

onslaughts of the demon. He took Brahma into confidence and both went to Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu had explained in detail as to how the Devas and Asuras had, at the time of the churning of the Kshenabdhi for Amruta, deposited all their weapons with Dadhechi Maharishi and also explained how Dadhechi Maharishi had devoured them when the depositors failed to collect the weapons from him. Those weapons had therefore formed part and parcel of the Maharishi's backbone and Lord Vishnu had suggested that Indira should beg Maharishi to give his backbone for his use as Vajrayudha to kill the demon Vratrasura. The Maharishi had benevolently gifted his backbone to Indira and attained Moksha.

Indira now challenged the demon and a ferocious battle ensued. When Indira took up the Vajrayudha to attack the demon, the latter took to his heels and hid himself in the ocean at the suggestion of Brahma. Indira had sought Agastya's help. Agastya drunk the water and Indira could locate the demon and killed him by his vajrayudha.

Indira had again been subjected to Brahmahathi Dosha and had hidden himself within the thin stem of a lotus. Absence of Indira from his Loka made it desolate and the Devas selected Nahusha, a king who had performed many Aswamedha yagas, as their Indira. Soon after his selection Nahusha expressed that he should be served by Indirani, the wife of the defunct Indira. She got frightened and consulted Bruhaspathi. he suggested that she should send word to Nahausha that he could welcome him if only he would come to her in a palanquin lifted by the Saptharishis. Agastya, Arjuna, Gouthama, Krishna, Dileetha,

Markandeya and Vasishta. Nahusha accordingly got into a palanquin lifted by the said Rishis. Not knowing the greatness of the bearers, he unduly hastened them by ordering "sarpa" (meaning "go fast").

Agastya who was the first bearer cursed him to become a 'sarpa' and nahusha became a snake.

Again, the Devas were without Indira. Bruhaspathi contacted Indira in his hiding place and advised him to go to bhooloka ostensibly for hunting purposes. As the original sin of Indira was born of his slighting Bruhaspathi, his Guru, that sin could be absorbed only by his Guru, and hence bruhaspathi now came to the rescue. Indira came to Bhooloka and took bath in sacred waters and offered worship in many shrines but the Brahmahathi did not release him. While wandering from place to place, he happened to approach Kadambavana (Halasya Kshetra is also called Kadambavana Kshetra) and immediately, the Dosha released him. Bruhaspathi informed Indira that a very sacred Theertha and a sacred sthala existed in the place and asked him to identify it. Indira found a sacred Linga in the place and, after taking bath in the theertha (Golden Lotus Tank), worshipped Lord Siva in the Linga's form. Indira sent the Devas to procure materials for the performance of puja to the Linga. To his delight, by Lord's grace, several golden lotus flowers were found floating in the tank. He gathered them and hastened to do the puja. The forest around the Linga was cleared and then a celestial vimanaa brought by Vishwakarma at the behest of Indira descended on the place. Indira fixed it and completed his puja with all the materials brought from Devaloka. Lord Somasundareswara was much

be fortunate if he was allowed to do puja to the Lord who so benevolently relieved him of his Brahma-hathi Dosha. The Lord ordained that Indira should do puja on one day every year (namely, the Chitra Pournami day) and get the benefits of having done puja throughout the year. Indira returned to his Loka with the blessings of the Lord.

2. IRAAVATA REDEEMED FROM SIN

Once sage Durvaasa installed in his name a sacred Linga in Varanasi and was worshipping the Linga when, by the Lord's grace, a golden lotus flower dropped from the Linga. Durvaasa was delighted and he picked it up with great devotion and care.

He then went to Devaloka where the Devas were celebrating the Victorious return of Indira from a battle with Asuras. Indira was riding his white elephant, IRAAVATHAM. The Devas were giving various presents to Indira. Durvaasa presented the golden lotus flower to Indira who received it nonchalantly with one hand and placed it on the elephant. The elephant pushed it down and trampled it under its foot. Durvaasa was incensed at this and cursed Indira to suffer humiliation at the hands of a Pandya King and the elephant to become an ordinary black elephant in a jungle.

Indira and the Devas apologised to the sage and fervently prayed that the curse be nullified. Durvaasa relented and said that Indira's humiliation would be symbolic and the elephant would regain its celestial life after a century. Accordingly the elephant left the Devaloka and a black elephant and wandered about in the jungle.

After a century, the elephant, happened to enter the Kadambavana. It was the 'Golden Lotus Tank'. Immediately it regained full knowledge about its own real self, bathed in the tank and was transformed into IRAAVATHAM. Once, again it worshipped Lord Somasundareshwara. The Lord appeared before the elephant and gave a boon to it. The elephant prayed that it should be allowed to bear the Lord's Vimaanaa along with the eight elephants which were already bearing it on their backs. The Lord told IRAAVATHAM that it would give immense pleasure to Him even when it bore Indira on its back as usual as Indira was a good devotee of the Lord.

IRAAVATHAM then created a Theertha known as Iraavatha Theertha. It also installed Linga and Vinayaka Idol near Kadambavana (to the west of Lord Somasundareshwara) and was worshipping them. Indira sent his messengers in search of Irravatham and the latter sent them back with a promise to return to Devaloka in due course. It then formed a city called Iravathapuram (to the east of Lord Somasundareshwara) and installed a Linga called Indireswara there. Then it went back to the Devaloka.

3. BUILDING OF MADURAPURAM IN KADAMBA FOREST

Kulasekara the Pandya king was ruling from Manavur which was situated to the east of Kadambavanam. Dhananjaya, a merchant was once returning to MANAVUR after transacting business in

several places. When he reached Kadambavanam it was dark and it was a Monday. To his surprise, he found Devas from the Devaloka doing puja to Lord Somasundareswarar. The pujas continued throughout the night and the Devas disappeared at the dawn. The merchant, on return to his place informed the king about it. The king was an ardent devotee of Lord Siva who had appeared in the form of a SIDDHAPURUSHA in the King's dream and asked him to transform the Kadambavana into a beautiful city.

Next day, the king with his retinue went to the Kadambavana, bathed in the golden lotus-tank and worshipped Lord Somasundareswara. The jungle was speedily cleared under the king's supervision. The king then discussed with his ministers the formation of a city. The Lord then appeared before the king in the same form of SIDDHAPURUSHA and explained to him in detail how the city and the temple should be formed. A big city with a temple in the middle was then built according to the specifications given by the Lord. At the time of inauguration of the city, the Lord, in order to sanctify it, sprinkled drops of Amruta from the crescent on the Lord's head and the city thus became not only sacred but also sweet; Hence, it was called Madurai (Meaning sweet; 'MADURAM'). For the protection of the city, Iyyanar (HARIHARAPUTRA) Sathamathas (Brahma, Narayana and others) Viushnu and Badrakali were installed respectively to the east, south, west and north of the city,

The city was, therefore, formed by, His dictates, His guidance and His grace.

4. PARVATHI BORN AS THATATHAKAI

Malayadhwaja Pandya, son of Kulasekhara Pandya, succeeded his father to the Kingdom. -Like his father, he was an ardent devotee of Lord siva and was ruling the Kingdom according to the tenets of Dharma. His wife was Kanchanamalai, daughter of Surasena, a Chola king. Malayadhwaja had no offspring for a long time. He therefore, performed ninety-nine Aswametha yagas and started the hundredth also. Then Indira, fearing that, on completion of the hundredth yaga, the Pandya king would oust him from power and become Indira himself, advised the Pandya king to perform the puthra Kameshti yaga for getting an offspring. Malayadhwaja performed that yaga and, much to his delight, there appeared from the sacrificial fire a girl child of three years. The beauty of the child defied description as she was an Avatar of Goddess Parvathi. The child straightaway walked into the lap of the queen who was seated by the side of the king. The ecstasy of thus getting a child was, however, marred on finding that the child had three breasts instead of the normal two. He, therefore, felt sad but, the voice of Lord was heard saying that the king should not worry about the unusual feature as it would disappear the moment the girl set Her eyes on Her would-be husband. He also said that the King should give the child all the training that would normally be given to a boy and that the child should be called THATATHAKAI. The king was immensely pleased.

In due course, THATATHAKAI completed Her studies and training. The king crowned Her as the ruler of the Kingdom before he passed away.

THATATHAKAI had proved to be an ideal ruler. Anindhithai and Kamalini, two celestial residents of Kailas who had also been born as mortal beings, became Her bodyguards.

Agastya who was narrating this to the other sages was asked by them how the Supreme Mother, Parvathi, happened to become the child of mortals. Agastya told them that Viswavasnu, a Vidyadhara had a daughter by name Vichavathi, she wanted to worship Goddess Parvathi. Her father taught her the special Mantra for the purpose and told her that Madurai (known as Booloka Sivaloka) was the first among the sixty four sakthi peetas and the worship of Parvathi at the place would yield all the desired benefits. Vichavathi accordingly proceeded to Madurai and ardently worshipped Parvathi. The supreme mother appeared before her in the form of a small child and asked Vichavathi what her prayer was? Vichavathi expressed the wish that she should always have the grace of the supreme mother and that she should become her child in the same form in which she had appeared before her then. The supreme Mother granted the request and said Vichavathi would become wife or Malayadhwaaja Pandya and that the Supreme Mother would become her child.

5. LORD SIVA AS PANDYADEVA

WEDDED THATATHAKAI

In the course, THATATHAKAI came of age and her mother became anxious of her daughter's marriage.

Thatathakai assured her mother that the wedding would take place at the appropriate time and that in the meantime she should set out on a *Dikvijaya* tour with all her retinue. She conquered the *Dik palakas* (*Indira* and others) without any difficulty and then went to Mount Kailas. Her forces surrounded the Mount. The watch and ward of the Mount informed *Nandikeswara* of this. *Nandikeswara* appraised Lord Siva, the Lord of Mount Kailas, of this and directed the *Siva Ganas* to prepare themselves for a battle against the invaders. A fierce battle ensued and *Thatathakai* quickly routed the *Siva Ganas* by her powers. Lord, Siva, therefore, personally arrived at the battle field and beheld *Thatathakai*. The latter also saw the Lord and noticed that He was looking at Her with admiration. Immediately the third breast in her body disappeared. *Sumathi*, a minister of *Thatathakai*, informed Her of the Divine voice which had said at the time of Her appearance from the *Yaga Kunda* as a child that the third breast would disappear at the moment. She set her eyes on Her would-be husband. She gave up her fight. She blushed and made obeisance. The Lord said that He would marry Her on the next Monday and asked Her to return to *Madurai*. She did so.

The entire city of *Madurai* was beautified and people were delighted at the prospective wedding of their divine queen. A beautiful wedding hall was also prepared and guests' quarters were arranged to receive *Devas*, devotees of Lord Siva, Kings and others. Invitations were sent to all including Lord *Vishnu*, *Brahma* and all *Devas*. The *Devas* arrived at Mount Kailas.

Lord Siva was suitably dressed and adorned by *Kubera* for the occasion. Lord Siva, accompanied by all

the Devas, Rishis, etc., left for Madurai. The bridegroom and party were appropriately received at Madurai and were given palatial residences for their occupation. Kanchanamala, mother of Thatathakai, prayed to Lord Siva that He should consent to marry her daughter. The Lord agreed and proceeded to the wedding. Thatathakai arrived there in her wedding dress and sat by the side of the Lord. The wedding ceremonies were performed according to the Vedic rites under the guidance of Brahma.

After the completion of the wedding and other ceremonies, the guests left. The Lord then assumed the rulership of the Pandya Kingdom under the name of Sundarapandya. He established a town called Naduvur and installed a Linga and worshipped it Himself. He also worshipped Lord Somasundareshwara at Kadambavana thrice a day.

6. DANCE BEFORE SAGE PATHANJALI

Lord Siva invited all the Devas, Rishis and others, who had attended the Lord's wedding, to dinner. They completed their ablutions in the Golden Lotus Tank and arrived for the dinner. Then Pathanjali and Vyagrapada told the Lord that they could take food only after witnessing the Lord's dance at chidambaram (Golden Sabha). The Lord told them that He would perform the dance at Madurai itself for their benefit and also told them that Madurai was equal in merit to Chidambaram. Immediately a silver Sabha appeared on the scene with a dazzling platform at the centre. The Lord then performed the dance from the platform in the same manner as at Chidambaram.

Pathanjali and Vyagrapada and all those present witnessed the dance much to their delight and worshipped the Lord. Pathanjali and Vyagrapada were also assured by the Lord on their request that He would give darshan-in the dancing posture to all worshippers at Madurai and bless them with Moksha.

7. KUNDODARA GRANTED POWER TO CONSUME MUCH RICE

The food prepared for the wedding feast was served to all guests but yet the unconsumed remnants were in Himalayan quantities. Thatathakai Devi approached the Lord and informed Him of Her concern about it. The Lord smiled and willed that Gundodara, a Siva Gana attending on Him, should have insatiable hunger. Gundodara immediately felt the terrible pangs of hunger and prayed to the Lord for its appeasement. The Lord asked Thatathakai to feed Gundodara. She thanked the Lord and went with Gundodara.

Gundodara who was taken into the dining hall, helped himself with all that remained there and left nothing. All those who witnessed this including Thatathakai were awestruck. Then Devi went to the Lord looking abashed. The Lord immediately enquired of her if there was more unconsumed food and said that He would be pleased to depute a few more of the Siva Ganas if necessary. The Devi said that Gundodara was still feeling hungry after eating the entire food. Gundodara also followed closely and confirmed this.

8. QUENCHING OF KUNDODARA'S THIRST AND HUNGER AND THE BIRTH OF RIVER VAIGAI

The Lord, on hearing from Gundodara that his hunger was still to be appeased, smiled at Thatathakai and thought of Annapurna Devi, His Sakthi. Immediately, four big reservoirs of curd and rice appeared and the Lord asked Gundodara to help himself. He ate sumptuously and expressed his satisfaction. But, he was beset with another problem now. He grew very thirsty. The water available from the wells and tanks could not quench his thirst. Therefore he approached the Lord again. The Lord enjoined Ganga Devi, who was adorning His Jata, to flow in the form of a river in Madurai. Accordingly, the river Vaigai began to flow and Gundodara quenched his thirst drinking it. The river is also called Siva Ganga (as it came from the Lord's Jata) Siva Gnana Theertha (as it confer Gnana), Vegavathi (as it flows with speed of the wind) and Kruthamalai (as it surrounds Madurai in the form of garland).

9. MERGING THE SEVEN SEAS TO PLEASE HIS WIFE

While the Lord was ruling Pandya Kingdom as Sundara Pandya, several Rishis and Yogis used to visit Madurai and make obeisance to the Lord. Gauthama

residence. Kanchanamala respectfully received him and requested him to instruct her how to avoid rebirth. He eulogised her good fortune in having become the mother of Thatathakai and the mother-in-law of the Lord Siva.

He told her that penance was of three kinds; namely, mental, oral and physical. The first pertains to charity, kindness to all, speaking nothing but the truth, control of the senses and meditation of the Lord, the second relates to tapas like Panchakshara, Sri Rudra Mantras, study of the upanishads and preaching of Dharma and the third relates to doing puja to the Lord, going round the temples and sacred places, and bathing in sacred waters. Of the three, he said, the third was the best and to bath in the sea into which all rivers flow was the most beneficial.

Kanchanamala told Thatathakai about this and the latter accosted Him of her mother's wish to bath in the sea. The Lord said that He would summon not one but all the seven seas to Madurai. Immediately, the Seven seas, with their distinct colours intact, entered a tank in Madurai and roared but, by the Lord's command, they settled quickly within the tank.

10. BRINGING DOWN MALAYUDHUVAJA TO EARTH FROM DEVALOKA

The Lord and Thatatahkai were seated on a throne on the bank of the tank into which the seven seas had entered. The Lord then asked His Devi to call Her mother for taking bath in the seven seas. Accordingly Kanchanamala arrived there.

She enquired the learned men as to the mode of taking bath in the seas and they told her that the proper way was to hold the husband's hand, son's hand or the tail of cow's calf while bathing. Kanchanamala felt sad at having to hold the tail of a calf while bathing as her husband had died and as she had no son. On hearing this from Devi, the Lord thought of Malayadhwaja Pandya who was at that time seated with Indira in the Devaloka. Immediately, Malayadhwaja arrived at the tank in a celestial vimanam. He expressed his gratitude to the Lord and was about to prostrate before the Lord but the Lord held and embraced him.

The Lord then asked him to bath in the tank with his wife and they did so. After the bath, they assumed the form of the Lord to signify that they had become one with him. They then ascended the celestial Vimanam and went to Sivaloka. The Devi profusely thanked the Lord for his great kindness to Her parents.

11. BIRTH OF SUBRAMANYA TO HUMILIATE THE FORCES AGAINST HIM

Lord Siva ruled the Pandya kingdom as Sundara Pandya for a long period (sixteen Deva Years) and proved to be an ideal ruler. During that period, the Pandya Kingdom eclipsed the greatness of Chera and Chola Kingdoms.

The Lord desired to add one more laurel to the crown of the Pandya Kingdom. Accordingly, He ordained that Lord Subramanya should make an Avatar and become the son of Thatathakai Devi. This happened on an auspicious day. The Devas, rishis and other Kings

came and had darshan of the divine child. The citizens of Madurai were immensely happy at the birth of a prince.

All the Vedic ceremonies were duly performed and the child was named Ugra Varman. On the fifth birth day, Upanayanam was performed. UgraVarman learnt all the Vedas and arts required of a prince. He attained great physical prowess and His cultural attainments were unique. When he was in his teens, he displayed his talents in various ways and was the cynosure of all eyes. The Lord found that his son had all the thirty two 'Lakshanas' (ideal physical features) and was satisfied that he would be an ideal and successful ruler. The Lord then bestowed His thoughts on the question of getting a suitable bride to His son.

12. UGRA GIVEN THREE WEAPONS LIKE SULE

The Ministers were seized with the question of finding out a suitable bride to Ugrasena and finally concluded that Kanthimathi, daughter of Somasekhara, the king of Manavur, who hailed from the Surya Vamsa, would be the most suitable bride. Lord Somasundareswara of Madurai appeared in Somasekhara's dream and asked him to take his daughter, Kandhimathi, to Madurai and give her in marriage to the son of Sundara Pandya. Somasekhara was delighted at the Lord's appearance and lost no time in carrying out the divine injunction. while he was on his way to Madurai, Sundara Pandya and his ministers had started from Manavur and they met him enroute.

Somasekhara told them of his dream and they were all delighted.

Preparations for the wedding were made on a colossal scale. The entire city of Madurai wore a festive appearance and all its citizens were extremely happy. All the Devas, Rishis, Kings and others arrived at Madurai to grace the function. Bruhaspathi Deva pointed out to Sundara Pandya the ideal features of Kanthimathi's physical form and said that they augured quite well for her husband. The celestial wedding took place according to Vedic rites. Somasekhara gave invaluable presents to the bride and bridegroom. Then they were taken in a procession along the streets of the city. The guests, who attended the wedding, were duly honoured by Sundara Pandya and they then left for their places.

Sundara Pandya then decided to anoint the prince as a king. He told the prince that he should be aware of Indira, Varuna (see lord) and the Mount Meru and gave the prince three weapons to oppose the three when the need arose. The prince was then crowned as a king. Sundara Pandya instructed the ministers to look after the interests of their new king properly. Sundara Pandya and Thatathakai Devi then gave up their human forms, assumed their Godhood and entered the temple in Madurai.

13. DIVESTING UGRAPANDIYAN OF HIS POWER OVER THE SEA

Ugra Pandiya ruled the Kingdom efficiently. He performed ninety six Aswamedha yagas. Hence Indira

succeed as a ruler and could perform so many Aswamedha Yagas purely because there was widespread prosperity owing to unfailing seasonal rains. Hence Indira asked Varuna, the Sea Lord, to destroy the city of Madurai with floods. At his behest, the seas rose to great heights as if touching the moon. The tidal waves invaded Madurai from the east at the dead of night. Ugra pandiya was then asleep. Lord Siva appeared in his dream as a siddha purusha and informed him that the seas were about to destroy his city and advised him that he should immediately use the weapon given to him by his father at the time of ugrasena's marriage.

The king rushed with the weapon and threw it on the seas in the presence of siddha purusha. No sooner was this done than the roaring seas lost their ferocious form and became ankle deep: The siddha purusha then disappeared and Lord Siva and Parvathi gave darshan to Ugra Pandiya who gratefully prostrated before them. The King as a token of gratitude donated all the lands and villages between Madurai city and the sea to the Lord for this service.

14. BREAKING OF INDIRA'S CROWN

During the rule of Ugra Pandiya, there was an acute famine in the three Tamil Kingdoms of chera, Chola and Pandya. the Kings, therefore, went to Agastya and sought his help. After reading the planetary movements, the sage told them there would be a famine for twelve years. He advised them to seek the help of Indira. he also told them that they should propitiate Lord

Somasundareswara of Madurai by observing the Somavara viratham and that would help them to contact Indira in the Devaloka. The sage also told them that the observance of the viratham in Madurai would yield most beneficial results and he explained in detail the mode of observing it.

The three kings observed the viratham in strict accordance with the Rishi's instructions and this helped them to reach Indira's presence in Devaloka. Indira received them suitably and provided them with three seats which were slightly lower than the throne occupied by his self. The Chera and Chola kings occupied two of them but Ugra Pandiya ascended the throne of Indira and shared it with him. Indira was incensed at this. He, therefore, enquired only of the Chera and Chola kings what they wanted and granted their request for rains in their kingdoms. He also made suitable presents to them and they returned to their respective kingdoms.

Then Indira turned to Ugra Pandiya and, feigning to honour him, presented him with a necklace made up of pearls. The necklace was too heavy to be worn by an ordinary person. In fact, the necklace had to be carried by several assistants of Indira. But Ugra Pandiya received and wore it easily. Indira was wonder-struck and he praised Ugra Pandya by naming him "necklace-wearing pandya". Ugra Pandya was not carried away by this praise and he returned to Madurai without making any request to Indira about the rains. Hence the Pandya kingdom did not get rains while the other two kingdoms received copious rains.

Sometime later, Ugra Pandya was hunting near podiya Mountain (the abode of Agastya) and he noted the four celestial rain-bearing clouds, namely, Pushkala virutham Sangaritham, Dronam and Kalamukhi resting on the mountain. The king chained and imprisoned them.

Indira, who was already jealous of Ugra Pandya for this great prowess in humiliating the seas and wearing his heavy pearls necklace, invaded Madurai with all his forces with the imprisoning of the clouds as a pre-test. The Pandya king's forces encountered and routed the forces of Indira. The Indira and Pandya entered into a duel. Ugra Pandya attacked Indira with the unique weapon given to him by his father and it caused the fall of Indira's crown to the ground. Indira felt ashamed and ran away.

Indira then sent an emissary to the Pandya promising to send rains to his kingdom and requested him to release the clouds. The Pandya king did not have faith in his words. A vellala courtier of the king then offered himself as surety. The clouds were released. Indira then blessed the Pandya kingdom with copious rains.

15. UGRA PANDYA GIVEN GOLD FROM MAHAMERU

Ugra Pandya was constantly observing the Somavara Viratham as per the instructions of Agastya. Consequently he became the father of a remarkable son whom he named as Veera pandya. Veera pandya in course of time became a great scholar and warrior.

The Pandya Kingdom once again experienced a famine. Ugra pandya ascertained from learned men that the famine would last for a year. He became sad and prayed to Lord Somasundareswara to avert the misfortune but the Lord did not respond to his prayer. The king returned home grief-struck. That night, the Lord appeared in the form of siddha purusha in the king's dream and told him that the rains would fail as predicted; but the king should not worry about it as considerable riches were stored in a cave in the Mountain Meru and the king could fetch them after subjugating the Mountain. The king immediately set out with his armed forces to Mount Meru. There he respectfully invoked Meru but it did not respond. The king was enraged and he smote the mountain with the special weapon which his father had given him. The mountain shook to its foundations and then the titular deity of the mountain appeared with four heads and eight shoulders and white umbrella. The king accosted the figure and asked why it did not appear on his invocation. The deity told him that every day it had been sending reeds for the worship of Lord Sundareswara and Devi Meenakshi at Madurai. It had failed to do so that day. Therefore it had deserved punishment at king's hands. The Mountain then delivered the riches to the king as desired by him. The king returned to Madurai with the riches and distributed them among the people. He worshipped Lord Somasundareswara whose kindness had enabled him to tide over the difficult period. He then anointed his son Veera Pandya as king. Ugra Pandya then passed away.

16. TEACHING THE MEANING OF VEDAS TO MAHARISHIS

Once the great Deluge overtook the world and all including Brahma and Vishnu and the vedas were eclipsed. Lord Siva was directed to receive the three-fold functions of creation, protection and destruction and so he created Vishnu and from vishnu's body Brahma also. Brahma took up the function of creation. Lord Siva pronounced the Pranava Mantra and from that the Vedas came into being.

At Naimisaranya, the Rishis have studied Vedas. But they could not understand their import. At that time a Rishi named Arabanda appeared before them. They told him that they were unhappyy as they could not understand the import of the vedas. Arabanda told them that the vedas which emanated from Lord siva could be interpreted only by him. He also asked, the Rishis to proceed to Madurai where Somasundareswara's Vimanas, Lord Dakshinamoorthy was seated. They should do penance in front of Lord Dakshinamoorthy for getting enlightenment. The Rishis accordingly went to Madurai, worshipped Lord Somasundareswara and Goddess, Meenakshi. Then they went to Lord Dakshnamoorthy. They worshipped him and chanted the Mantras which they had learnt from Arabanda, for a year.

Towards the end, the Lord appeared in the form of lad of sixteen years. They prostrated and presented their prayers. He took them to Lord Siva's

Linga and explained to them the import of the vedas which only signified Lord Siva. He also explained that pranava also emanated from the Lord and the Gayatri from the pranava. The Lord ordained that the Vedas should be four. From him also emanated the twenty eight SIVAGAMAS. The Lord concluded saying that worship of Lord Siva alone would confer all the earthly benefits and Moksha. The Lord blessed the Rishis by touching them and then merged with siva linga form.

17. THE GOD AS VENDOR OF GEMS

Veera Pandya had several concubines. He had several sons through them but his queen did not bear him any child. Therefore, he and his queen, prayed to Lord Somasundareswara and observed several vratas.

At last, the queen gave birth to a son. When the prince was a child, Veera Pandya was killed by a tiger while hunting. The illegitimate sons of Veera Pandya took this opportunity to pilfer valuable ornaments from the treasury and also took possession of horses, elephants and others. They also stole the king's crown and ran away. The king's funeral obsequies were performed by the minor son of the queen.

The ministers wanted to crown the prince but they found to their dismay that the crown and priceless gems were missing. They did not know what to do and hence they took the prince to the temple of Lord Somasundareswara for guidance. In front of the temple, the Lord appeared before them in the guise of a Vendor of gems. The ministers explained to the vendor the requirements of gems for making a new crown for the

king. Thereupon, the vendor spread the various precious gems on a carpet and said they were worth fifteen crores of gold coins. He also told them that they were taken from the body of an Asura called Valan. The ministers became curious. They wanted to hear his story. The vendor narrated the story.

There was an Asura by name valan. He prayed to Lord Siva who was pleased with his penance and pujas. The Lord appeared and asked what boon he wanted. The Asura said that he should be immortal, and, if even he should die, his body should become a cornucopia of valuable gems. The Lord favoured him with the boon. Then Valan challenged Indira for a battle. Indira could not withstand the Asura and so he adopted a strategy to kill the Asura surrounded by the Devas, Indira approached the Asura and told him that he (Indira) was pleased with his prowess and wanted to bestow a boon on him. The Asura ridiculed the offer and said that he could obtain boons even from Lord Siva and there was no need for him to be bestowed a boon by Indira who had earlier suffered a defeat at his hands in a battle. On the other hand, he said, he was prepared to favour him with a boon if he so desired. Indira asked the Asura to become a "Yaga pasu, "to be sacrificed at a yaga in Mount Kailas to propitiate Lord Siva. The Asura agreed and he was accordingly sacrificed at the yaga. The various parts of his body became valuable gems.

The vendor had explained the various qualities of each of the gems, the places where the gems were found and their beneficial effects. He then took the gems in his hands, turned to Lord Somasundareswar and blessed the prince while handing them over to the prince. He told him that he should assume the name of

Abisheka Pandya on his ascendenning the throne. The ministers were making arrangements to weigh gold for payment to the gems. But suddenly he vanished. Lord Siva and Parvathi were found entering the temple. The Prince and the Ministers concluded that it was the Lord who had taken the form of the Vendor and they entered the temple and worshipped the Lord.

Then a crown was made with the gems and the prince was enthroned. He adopted the name of Abisheka Pandya. Later, he also recovered the valuables stolen by the illegitimate sons of his father.

18. ORDERING THE CLOUDS TO DRINK WATER FROM THE OCEAN

Abisheka Pandya worshipped Lord Soma sundareswara on a chaitra natshatra day of chaitra (Mesha) month and offered abhisheka and puja were conducted on a grand scale. As ordained earlier by the Lord, that day was the day Indira used to perform puja there. As the pandya king was doing the puja on that day, Indira had to wait till the king finished his worship and then he performed his puja. Indira felt depressed.

Varma noticed this and Indira told him about what had happened at Madurai. Varuna then asked Indira whether the Linga form of Lord Siva in the Madurai temple was better than all the other Lingas. Indira told him that it was so and that Lord Somasundareswarā in Madurai had relieved him and his Iravatham of their curses. Varuna who was suffering

Somasundareswara could cure him of the malady. Indira said that the Lord could cure even the evil of birth and death which even Vishnu and Brahma could not and that Varuna could verify this.

Varuna wanted to test the Lord's powers and get his malady cured. So, he ordered the seas under his control to destroy the city of Madurai. The seas accordingly entered the city of Madurai. The king and the citizens were terribly afraid that the city would be submerged. The king, therefore, rushed to Somasundareswara and prayed for protection. The Lord directed the four clouds in his 'Jata' to drink all the water from the seas. The king and the people of Madurai were greatly relieved and worshipped the Lord in gratefulness.

19. STOPPAGE OF TORRENTIAL RAIN

Varuna was greatly incensed at the draining of the seas and directed the seven clouds under his control to rain torrentially on the city of Madurai and destroy it. The clouds carried out Varuna's order and the city of Madurai was baffled, by the heavy and incessant rains. The King Abhisheka Pandya, and citizens prayed to Lord Somasundareswara to save them from the calamity. The Lord responded to their prayers and directed the four clouds in his 'Jata' to enclose the city on all the four sides and shield it from the rains. The clouds did as ordered and the entire city became a closed area. The four clouds released by the Lord from His 'Jata' acted as a bulwark against the rains discharged by Varuna's clouds. Varuna was again humiliated.

Realising that he was up against heavy odds, Varuna came to Madurai and took his bath in the Golden Lotus Tank and fervently worshipped the Lord. Even before He took his bath in the tank, he was cured of his stomach pain. Varuna profusely apologised to the Lord for his audacity in having challenged the Lord's prowess.

The city of Madurai is also called "Naanmaadakoodal" to signify its fortification on all the four sides and the top by the Lord's four clouds.

20. THE KING HIMSELF COMES TO SIVA, THE SIDDHA

Lord Somasundareswara once appeared as a Siddha Purusha with long and flowing jata, tiger skin robe etc. He performed several miracles in Madurai city. He appeared and disappeared as he liked, was seen in several places at the same time, made young persons old and old persons young and changed the sex of persons, converted base metal into gold and did various other super human acts. The entire city of Madurai was awe struck at these activities of the Siddha.

The king, Abisheka Pandya, heard about this and sent his men to fetch the siddha. The men went to the Siddha but had forgotten their duties while watching the Siddha's miracles. The king then sent his ministers but the siddha refused to go to the king saying that he did not want anything from the king. The king was duly informed of it. The king observed that such great men would not mind even the gods and hence could understand Siddha's refusal to come to him.

21. STONE ELEPHANT EATS SUGARCANE

Abisheka Pandya was struck with remorse for having asked the Siddha to come to him instead of going himself to the great purusha. He, therefore, decided to visit the Siddha himself. The Siddha became aware of the king's intention and was staying near the Indira Vimana of Lord Somasundareswara.

On the first day of Makara Masa (Pongal festival day) the king used to go to the temple and worship Lord Somasundareswara. The king completed his worship and was coming out of the temple. His orderlies, who were going in advance of the king, saw the Siddha seated on a tiger skin, and, waving the canes in their hands, they ordered him to leave the place. The king who came behind them enquired the Siddha where from he came and what actually he wanted. The Siddha told him that he was on a pilgrimage to all kshetras to worship Lord Siva and that in the course of his pilgrimage he came to Madurai, a visit which would emancipate souls from bodily bondage. He also said that he could perform great wonder and that he did not want anything from the king.

The king was struck with what the Siddha had said and wanted to put him to a test. Just then, a ryot arrived there with a sugarcane. The king asked the siddha to prove his capacity to work miracles by making the stone elephant eat the sugarcane. The Siddha said that, though he had nothing to gain by proving his capacity to the king, he would all the same make the

stone elephant eat the sugarcane. So saying, he looked at the elephant and lo! In a moment, the elephant rolled its eye, saw all around, raised its trunk, shrieked and then plucked the pearl necklace from the king's neck and swallowed it. The king's orderlies approached the Siddha menacingly and later asked them to stop. They were unable to move further. He regretted his folly and prostrated before the Siddha and apologised. The Siddha then blessed him with a son and the elephant also disgorged the pearl necklace and put it on the king's neck. It again became a stone elephant as before. The Siddha also instantaneously disappeared from the scene.

The king concluded that this was a Leela of the Lord Somasundareswara. He regretted his folly which had closed his mind and eyes to the Leela vibuthi of the Lord. The king then begot a son vikrama by name. He passed away soon after.

22. KILLING THE ELEPHANT SENT BY JAIN

Vikkrama Pandya was ruling his kingdom efficiently. He put the Saiva religion on strong foundations by weeding out the newly sprung Buddhism and Jainism. He built a new temple adjacent to the Indira Vimana of Lord Somasundareswara and installed the idol of the siddha therein. He was worshipping it regularly.

The contemporary chola king, who was in Kancheepuram, embraced Jainism, became acrimonious towards Vikkrama pandya. He however, did not have the

prowess to defeat the Pandya in a straight battle. Therefore, he decided on a strategy. Accordingly, he sent for the eight thousand jains who were residing in eight mountains. On seeing the king's letter, all of them proceeded to Kancheepuram and blessed the king touching his head with peacock's feathers which they used to hold in their hands. The king told them that if they could kill the Pandya by performing an "Aabiehara - Homa" (sacrifice for causing harm to others) he would reward them with half his kingdom.

The jains immediately prepared themselves for the Homa and performed it on a large scale. So huge a fire was raised in the Homa Gunda that all the trees and fields around had to be burnt. Then a huge elephant arose out of the Homa Gunda. The Jains directed the elephant to destroy the Pandya king and his kingdom. The elephant began its journey and the jains followed it with the Chola king's armed forces.

The elephant's ferocious appearance and its march were reported to the Pandya and he immediately prayed to Lord Somasundareswara to save him from the impending danger. The Lord reassured him saying that he would appear as an archer and kill the elephant and asked the king to put on the eastern side of the city a structure over which the archer could sit. The king put up a Mantap with sixteen pillars. The Lord appeared as a young and strong archer and ascended the Mantap and took his seat on it. When the elephant was coming at a distance, the archer struck it with an arrow and it fell down dead.

The Jains witnessed the death of the elephant and were thrown off their guard. The Pandya's forces

routed the chola forces. The king was grateful to the Lord and prayed that He should stay on the Mantap for ever. The Lord acceded to the prayer and also granted him several boons. The arrow released by the archer took the form of Lord Narashima. Romesa Rishi and Prahlatha also worshipped him (Narasimha).

The king then begot a son by name Rajasekhara and ruled over the Pandya kingdom for long.

23. BLESSING A BRAHMIN GIRL

During the reign of Vikkrama Pandya, there was a Brahmin by name Virupaksha who lived in Madurai. His wife was Subha vrata. For long, they had no offspring and their relentless prayers and observance of various Vritas, gave them a daughter whom they named Gowri.

When Gowri was five years old, she showed inclination towards salvation and asked her father to guide her for the fulfilment of her objective. He initiated her into Parvathi mantra. Gowri was constantly reciting the Mantra with great devotion. When she grew to marriageable age, her father looked for a suitable match. One day a Vaishnava Brahmachari came to Virupaksha's house. He was begging for alms in fulfilment of his Brahmachari Vradha.

On seeing the Brahmachari, Virupaksha recited the appropriate mantra and poured water into the hands of the Brahmachari to signify the Kannikadana of Gowri to him. The bride and her mother were terribly surprised at this action. He had not even made any enquiries regarding the Brahmachari and his antecedents. They,

however, made further enquiries and found that the bachelor was quite an eligible person except that he followed the vaishnavaita cult. The marriage was celebrated and the bride was sent with the bridegroom.

The bridegroom's parents, being vaishnavaites, did not like the match and illtreated Gowri. One day they left Gowri locked in the house to attend a marriage. Gowri who was brought up in staunch saivaita traditions, was unhappy as she could not see any devotee of Lord Siva around her. Then Lord Somasundareswara assumed the form of an old saivite Brahmin and came to her house. She welcomed him and expressed her happiness on his visit. He said that he was hungry and wanted food. Gowri told him that she was locked. He asked her to touch the lock with her hand. To her surprise, the lock opened at her touch. She prepared rich food and served it to him. After taking the food, the old Brahmin changed his appearance and became a young adult. Gowri was taken aback at the sight. Just then, Gowri's father-in-law and mother-in-law returned to the house and the Lord immediately attained the form of a child.

The mother-in-law enquired Gowri how the child came there. She informed that Devadatha and his wife had left the child and asked her to look after it. The father-in-law and mother-in-law were greatly displeased that a saivite child should be under her protection and drove her and the child out of the house.

Gowri did not know what to do and she prayed to Lord Somasundareswara and Parasakthi.

Immediately, the child vanished and Lord Siva and Parvathi appeared and took her with them. She became one with Uma Devi.

24. PERFORMANCE OF VARIOUS KINDS OF DANCES

Rajasekhara Pandya succeeded his father Vikkrama Pandya to the throne. He was a great scholar and ruled the country efficiently.

His contemporary in the chola kingdom was Karikaal Peruvalathan. He was an ardent devotee of the Lord of Jambukeswara near Thiruchirapalli. Once a poet of the chola kingdom came to Madurai and told Rajasekara Pandya that the chola king knew all the sixty four arts while he (Pandya) knew one less as he did not know Bhratha sastra pertaining to dances (Bharatha-natya). Rajasekara felt humiliated. He therefore, secured the services of persons well versed in bharatha sastra and learnt it. While he practised the dances prescribed in the sastra, he felt exhausted. This made him believe that the Lord who was in an eternal dance posture ought to feel very inconvenient indeed. This belief made him pray to the Lord to ease the burden of the one leg (left) on which he was standing. Accordingly the Lord shifted the burden to his right leg. Thus it could be seen that the Lord supports Himself on his right leg in Madurai while every where else it is the left leg that bears his weight.

**25. BROUGHT TO LIGHT THE TRUTH
ABOUT THE KILLING
OF BRAAHMIN WOMAN**

Rajasekhara Pandya was succeeded to the throne by his son Kulothunga. Kulothunga had several wives and several sons. The eldest son known as Anantha Guna was a great warrior. During Kulothunga's reign, a Brahmin from Thiruppathur. his wife and child were proceeding to Madurai through a jungle tract. He left his wife and child under a banyan tree and went in search of water to quench their thirst. The woman lay down in the shade of the tree. An arrow which had long been struck at a branch of the tree fell down on account of the wind and pierced the woman's stomach. She died immediately. just then, a hunter with a bow and an arrow arrived there and took rest under the same tree.

The Brahmin returned with water and found his wife dead. He noticed the hunter under the tree and suspected that he was responsible for the woman's death and hence charged him for murder and took him to the king's court in Madurai. The Brahmin pointed out the king that there was no protection in his kingdom.

The king felt sad that in his reign innocent woman should have died a violent death and enquired of the Brahmin for details. The latter told the king that the hunter had killed his wife during his absence for a short

time while he was on a mission to fetch water. The hunter pleaded innocence and denied any knowledge about the death of the woman. The hunter was subjected to a lot of pressure, he reiterated his earlier versions only. The king became thoughtful and considered why the hunter should have killed the woman at all. He, therefore, asked his ministers to further examine the question and help him to arrive at a just decision. The ministers said that divine guidance should be sought in this case.

The king sent the Brahmin promising to give his decision later. He then went to Lord Somasundareswara and prayed for guidance. The Lord's voice was then heard asking the king and the Brahmin to go to a wedding which was to take place that night in one of the streets in Madurai. The King and the Brahmin heard the conversation between two messengers of Yama, the God of death. One of the messengers expressed his perplexity as to how to contrive to take the life of the bridegroom as ordered by their master as the bridegroom was surrounded by a crowd of persons. The other replied that it should be easy to make a cow tied near the wedding place to break away from its tether and horn the bridegroom just as a Brahmin woman was done to death by the fall of an old arrow from the tree earlier the day. The king and the Brahmin waited further to see whether the bridegroom would meet his death in the manner stated. The king and the Brahmin were now convinced that the hunter was innocent. The king rewarded the Brahmin and the hunter and thanked Lord Somasundareswara for having guided him in resolving this intricate case.

26. ANNIHILATING THE EVIL MAN FOR THE SIN OF HAVING SLEPT WITH MOTHER AND KILLED THE FATHER

During Kulothunga's reign, there lived a Brahmin in Avanthi. He had a beautiful but very undesirable wife. He begot a son through her and the son was a vagabond. He committed all sorts of offences including murder. He once wanted to have illicit intercourse with his own mother and the mother also satisfied his desire. The Brahmin became aware of this but he kept the secret to himself. Even so, the son killed his father despite the protests of the mother. He then performed the funeral ceremonies of the father and later left the place with his mother and with all the valuables they could carry. While they were travelling through a jungle, they encountered some robbers who deprived them of the valuables. The robbers also took away the mother with them.

The son was seized with Brahmahathi Dosha on account of the murder of his father. He was greatly afflicted thereby and every movement of his life was a torture to him. While wandering with this affliction, he happened to approach the city of Madurai by divine grace.

Lord Somasundareswara and Goddess Meenakshi were then seated near temple gopuram in the guise of a hunter and his wife. They had some ferocious dogs with them. The Lord showed to Goddess Meenakshi the approach of the gross sinner (Brahmin's

son). The Lord accosted him and enquired him what his trouble was. The Brahmin's son narrated his story. The Lord told him that the heinous sins committed by him could not be easily wiped off and suggested that he should take alms, eat only once a day, serve the devotees of Lord Siva, feed cows with greens every morning before sunrise, bathe in the Lord's Abhisheka Theertha thrice daily and so anga-pradakeshina (rolling on the ground) around Lord Siva if he wanted to expiate his sins.

Goddess Meenakshi expressed her surprise that the Lord should have given advice to such a great sinner and the Lord replied that it was only such gross sinners who should be looked after with great compassion and blessed with proper guidance. The Lord and the Goddess then disappeared.

The Brahmin's son strictly followed the Lord's injunctions and in three months he attained the personality of godly Brahmin and in due course he attained the feet of the Lord. The king also came to know of this and he adored Lord Somasundareswara who could help such a great sinner to achieve emancipation of his soul.

27. EXECUTING THE SIDDHA TO SAVE THE WIFE OF PRECEPTOR, WHO TAUGHT ARCHERY

During the reign of Kulothunga, there lived a man in Madurai who came to Madurai from different region. He was teaching swordsmanship to people. He was greatly devoted to Lord Somasundareswara and had

a pure mind. He had a disciple by name Siddhan. Siddhan was capable swordsman and was proud of his ability. He became a rival to his guru and earned more than his guru.

He became avaricious and wanted to drive his Guru out of Madurai so that he could add to his own earnings. He slowly prevailed upon the persons who were learning from his Guru to become his own (Siddhan's) disciples. He also made overtures to his Guru's wife and, one day, during his Guru's absence, he went to the Guru's house and dragged his wife. She was enraged and threw him out and closed the door. She was distressed at her helplessness and prayed to Lord Somasundareswara for help. Lord Somasundareswara took the form of the Guru and challenged Siddhan for a sword fight. Siddhan agreed. A fierce fight ensued. Finally the Lord in the form of the Guru warned Siddhan to protect his body which had committed the great sin of undesirable union with his Guru's wife and had also assaulted her. The Lord severed Siddhan's limbs and head one after the other. The disciples of the successful swordsman went to his house and told his wife about the fight that took place. Her husband who just then returned from the temple was surprised at what they had said and denied his having fought with Siddhan and having killed him. It became plain now that the Lord had performed this leela out of his infinite kindness.

The Guru's wife then told them about Siddhan's behaviour and her prayers to the Lord for help. The Lord's words during the fight when he slayed Siddhan's bore out the words of the Guru's wife and all were happy and thankful to God.

The king who came to know of this greatly admired the Lord and honoured the swordsman and his wife.

28. MAKING THE SNAKES SENT BY BUDDHA SANYASINS POISONLESS

King Kulothunga was succeeded by his son Anantha Guna Pandya. The latter was as devoted to Lord Somasundareswara as his forefathers.

The eight thousand Jains who were propagating Jainism were jealous of the Pandya who was a staunch saivite and the Jains wanted to kill him. They performed a Homa for that purpose. A demon arose out of the sacred Homa fire and they directed it to devour the Pandya.

The demon took the form of a huge serpent and proceeded to Madurai. The king was appraised of the approach of this demoniacal serpent on the western side of Madurai. He immediately suspected it to be the handwork of the Jains and prayed unto Lord Somasundareswara for guidance.

With the grace of the Lord, he went to the west of the Madurai city and attacked the serpent and finally killed it, but not before the serpent had emitted its poison in a huge quantity. The effects of the poison proved very detrimental (deleterious) to the entire city and the king again approached the Lord and prayed for guidance. The Lord then sprinkled a drop of the Amirtha from the crescent in His Jata and this was enough to obviate the evil effects of the poison.

29. KILLING COWS SENT BY SAME SANYASINS

As Ananthaguna Pandya killed the serpent, the Jains, who had followed it, ran away. They, however, persisted in their endeavours and decided to send a demoniac cow to achieve their purpose. They hoped that the saivites, being Hindus, would not harm a cow. They performed a Homa and demoniac cow emanated from the sacrificial fire. They directed it to Madurai.

The king learnt about the cow's march towards his kingdom. He and the elder citizens of Madurai again prayed unto Lord Somasundareswara for help. The Lord sent Nandhikeswara to tame the cow.

Nandhikeswara attacked the cow and killed it. The place where it died is called 'pasu Malai' (Cow Mountain) now. The king and the people of Madurai heaved a sigh of relief. Nandhikeswara stayed in the form a Mountain and returned to the Lord in his sukshinta (abstract) form. The Lord was happy at what Lord Nandhikeswara had done.

Sri Rama, son of Dasaratha, stayed for some time on the mountain form of Nandhikeswara with his retinue and the vanara (monkey) forces. Agastya met Sri Rama and explained to him the greatness of Madurai. Sri Rama, therefore, took his bath in the Golden lotus tank, worshipped Lord Somasundareswara and prayed for success on his expediton to Lanka. The Lord assured

should build a dam across the sea to the south-east of, Madurai. So, Sri Rama installed a Siva Linga at Rameswaram to get rid of Brahmahathi Dosha to which he became subject as a result, of his having killed Ravana. He also worshipped Lord Soma sundareswara before he went back to Ayodhya.

30. CREATING THE ILLUSORY SOLDIERSTO SAVE THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF PANDYA ARMY

Anantha Guna Pandya was succeeded by his son Kulabhushana on the throne. He proved to be a just and capable ruler. The General of his army was one Sundara Somanathan. The General was a great devotee of Siva and considered the devotees of Siva as Siva Himself. There was then a petty chieftain by name Sethurayan who was proud of his prowess and wanted to attack the Pandya kingdom. The king, therefore, asked his general to increase the strength of his army and provided him with ample financial resources and technical advice for the purpose.

The General worshipped Lord Soma Sundareswara and offered the entire financial resources, given to him by the king, for service to the Lord and his devotees. He built various additional structure to the temple of the Lord, doled out money to all devotees of the Siva and also fed them sumptuously. The king came to know of this. But the General was feigning to be actively involved in

took place for six months. the king, therefore, gave an ultimatum to the general to produce the newly recruited regiment within twenty four hours.

The commander prayed unto Lord Somasundareswara to help him in this difficult situation. The Lord assured him that He would appear the next day with a regiment. The next morning the General worshipped the Lord and went to the king. The Lord appeared at the appointed time with the regiment. The Siva Ganas took the form of soldiers and the Lord himself was riding a horse as the Leader. The king inspected the regiment and was greatly pleased. The king was specially struck by the personality of the leader and beckoned him and gave him various presents.

Just then, a messenger came and told the king that Sethurayan had been killed by a tiger while he was hunting. The king, therefore, asked the armed forces to be disbanded. Immediately, the Lord and the soldiers disappeared from sight. The king understood at once that it was the Lord's Leela and told his General that the latter was as good as Lord siva to him, as the commander had by his great devotion to the Lord, invoked his grace which had resulted in the performance of the Leelavibuthi.

31. PANDYA KING GIFTED WITH A MONEY-BAG WHICH WOULD NEVER BECOME EMPTY

Kulabhushana Pandya was a staunch observer of Vrathas like some vaara vratha to please Lord Siva. He was proud of this and he, on accocunt of such pride,

looked down upon brahmins. The Brahmins, therefore became poor, ignored the studies of the vedas and migrated to other places in search of livelihood.

The kingdom lost its prosperity. The king became worried and prayed unto Lord Somasundareswara for his blessing to relieve the kingdom from poverty. The Lord did not make any response as he was sore at the king's fault. The king was disappointed and returned to his place heart-broken.

The night, the Lord appeared in his dream as a Siddha Purusha and told him that, because of his negligence of the Brahmins, the kingdom was facing adversity. The Lord told him that the Vedas were very important for the Lord and the Brahmins who studies them were, therefore, equally important. The Lord, therefore, enjoined the king to treat the Brahmins as equal to the Lord himself. At the same time, the Lord gave him an abundant treasure for eradicating poverty. The king used the treasure for the benefit of the Brahmins and Vedas and beautified the temple of the Lord and Goddess Meenakshi. The kingdom became prosperous once again.

32. LORD SIVA DISGUIISING AND SELLING BANGLES

Once, the Lord Siva took the form of Bikshtanamurti for the purpose of testing the chastity of the wives of the Rishis at Taarukavanam. When the Lord came for alms to the houses of the Rishis, the wives of

the Rishis were infatuated with the Lord's personality and they not only gave him alms but their hearts as well. The Lord thus made their minds unsteady and disappeared from their midst. The Rishis who could easily understand things of the past, present and future, studied the frame of their wives' minds and cursed them to be born in the merchant community, at Madurai as they were infatuated with the Lord of Madurai and had lost the purity of their minds. They also said that this curse would lapse when the Lord of Madurai touched them physically.

The wives of the Rishis accordingly were born in the merchants families during the reign Kulabhushana Pandya. When they were in their teens, the Lord took the form of a vendor of bangles and came to the merchant's streets.

The Rishipathnis, who were growing in the merchants' families, were attracted by the vendor and they crowded around him. They were pleased to adorn their hands with suitable bangles which would add to their beauty. The Lord obliged them and fixed the bangles on their wrists with his own hands. The maids were also infatuated with the vendor as the Rishi pathnis had been before with the Bikshatana murthi. They, therefore, invited him to bring bangles to them again and again. Their offer to pay for the bangles was not immediately accepted by him, He promised to take the payment on the next day. So saying, he abruptly disappeared from their presence and they became aware thereby that this was another Leela of Lord Somasundareswara.

Those, who wore the bangles fixed to their hands by the Lord himself, led very happy lives and in the end attained the Lord's feet.

33. ASHTA SIDDHIS GRANTED TO YAKSISI

On the moment Kailas, once the Lord was seated beneath the Banyan tree with his consort, Goddess Parvathi. He was giving learned discourses to Sanaka. Rishis, Nandhikeswara, Bringi, Mahakala and others. Just then Krithika Devis who had fed the infant, Lord Muruga, with their milk appeared and prayed unto the Lord to instruct them in the Ashta Siddhis.

The Lord pointed out to Parvathi Devi seated by his side that she was the Parasakthi and Maheswari and the eight siddhis were serving her. If they prayed, she would grant them the Ashta Siddhis.

But the Krithika Devis failed to respect the Devi as enjoined by the Lord. So, the Lord cursed them to become stone slab under a banyan tree in a place called "Pattamangai" in Siviganga area of Ramanathapuram District. The Krithika Devis were strucht with remorse and at their request the Lord told them, that, after a thousand years, he would go to Pattamangai from Madurai and remove the curse and also give them the Ashta Siddhis.

The Lord pointed out to Parvathi Devi seated by his side that she was the Parasakthi and Maheswari and the eight siddhis were serving her. If they prayed, she would grant them the Ashta siddhis.

Accordingly a thousand years after the Krithka Devis had became stone slabs, the Lord of Madurai went to Pattamangai in the form of a philospher. No sooner did he view the stone slabs than the Krithika Devis

regained their original forms and prostrated before the Lord. The Lord touched their hands with his hands and clearly instructed them in the eight siddhis. He also said that ardent devotees of his would not mind those siddhis but the siddhis would be at their beck and call.

The Krithika Devis, by the Grace of the Lord, constantly thought of Parvathi Devi and attained the eight siddhis. They then reached Mount Kailas.

34. THROWING OPEN THE DOOR OF THE TEMPLE FOR CHOLA KING

In Kancheepuram, there was a Chola king by name Kaduvettia Cholan (Chola who destroyed forest). It was he who built the city of Kancheepuram destroying forests in the area. He was an ardent Sivabhaktha who believed that Lord Siva was the only supreme power. He was constantly thinking of the various Leelas performed by the Lord of Madurai and was yearning to visit Madurai and worship the Lord and Goddess Meenakshi.

The Lord of Madurai appeared in Chola's dream and told him to go to Madurai incognito and alone. He accordingly proceeded to Madurai walking the entire distance to Madurai and found the river Vaigai in high floods. He was therefore depressed. The Lord of Madurai assumed the form of the same Siddha Purusha as assured in his dream and caused the floods to subside. The Siddha Purusha then led the Chola King into the city through the fort gates, although they were locked and helped to worship the Lord and Goddess. The king prayed to the Lord and Goddess fervently in thankfulness

for the darshan given to him. The Siddha purusha again led the Chola King back to the Vaigai and after crossing it, the Siddha Purusha applied sacred ash to the king's forehead and blessed him with a safe journey back to his place. The Siddha Purusha then turned to the city and made the Vrishabha mark after obliterating the fish mark on the fort door.

All this happened during the night and at dawn the fort guards noticed the Vrishabha mark on the fort door. They were perplexed and verified the doors on the other three sides of the fort. The original fish marks on them were found intact. They reported this to the king who was also perplexed. That night, the Lord appeared in the king's dream and told him what had happened. The king was struck with the Lord's kindness and grace which always gave place to preference in the case of his devotees.

35. LORD SIVA SUPPLYING WATER TO THE PANDYAN ARMY

King Kulabhushana Pandya was succeeded to the throne by his son Rajendra Pandya.

During his reign, Kaduvettia Chola of Kancheepuram wanted to worship Lord Somasundareswara, Lord of Madurai, in public and for this reason extended his hand of friendship to the Pandya king. Rajendra Pandya also reciprocated this sentiment and it was settled that the Chola's daughter should be given in marriage to the Pandya King.

But Rajasimhan, the younger brother of Rajendra Pandya, wanted to marry the Chola's daughter and he went to Kancheepuram without his brother's knowledge for this purpose. The Chola also welcomed him and gave his daughter in marriage to him.

The Chola then invaded Madurai with the support of his son-in-law in order to make the latter as the king of the Pandya kingdom. The enemy forces were camping a little distance away from Madurai. The Pandya king went to the temple and complained to the Lord about the perfidy and treachery of his own brother and the Chola king. The Lord asked him to begin the battle the next day and told him that the victory would be his.

A fierce battle then ensued between the small army of the Pandya and the huge army of the Chola. By midday, by the grace of the Lord, the sun was so scorching that all water courses became dry. The armed forces, the elephants, horses etc., could not bear the agonising thirst with which they were afflicted.

Just then, the Lord appeared in the form of a human being and opened a drinking water stall for the benefit of the Pandyan army. That army was quite refreshed as the thirst of the soldiers was quenched. It attacked the enemy with redoubled vigour. The enemy's army, which was languishing under the stress of the abominable thirst, ran away. The Chola and Rajasimhan were taken prisoners.

Rajendra Pandya took the captives to the Lord and prayed for guidance as to how to deal with them. The Lord asked him to deal with them according to Dharma. Thereupon, the king sent the Chola King away

with a few elephants and other presents and separated his brother Rajasimhan from the royal family and made him live an inglorious life.

36. CONVERTING BASE METALS INTO GOLD ETC.,

There is a sacred place called "Poovanam" in the Pandya Kingdom. The shrine of Lord Siva there is so famous that Devas like Indira and Surya used to worship the Lord there. In that temple, there was a Devadasi (a dancer who had dedicated herself to the service of the Lord) by name Ponnaniyal. She was not only a beautiful woman and an accomplished dancer but also a great and true devotee of the Lord. She spent her entire day in the service of the Lord and in feeding his devotees.

She desired to make the idol of the Lord in gold. She obtained a wax impression of the metal image of the Lord. But she could proceed no further as she had no money, for her entire earnings had been always spent on the work of the Lord and in feeding Lord's devotees. She fervently prayed to the Lord to help her to fulfil her desire.

One day the Lord assumed the form of a Siddha Purusha and visited her house. But, without partaking the food served by her to all devotees, he sat aloof in a pensive mood. When he was invited to take food, she enquired her why she looked thin and famished. She told him of her desire and why it was not fulfilled. He then told her that her desire would be fulfilled and asked

to bring all the brass and lead vessels in her house. When she brought all such vessels, he sprinkled the sacred ash on them and told her that they would come gold if she put them in fire that night. She requested him to stay back that night in her house and complete the process. But the Siddha Purusha immediately disappeared after identifying himself as Siddha from Madurai.

She was now convinced that it was the Lord of Madurai who had come to her in the form of a Siddha. He acted as instructed, and the vessels became gold. The gold image was then made according to her desire.

37. VANQUISHING THE CHOLA KING

Rajendra Pandya was succeeded by his son Rajesa Pandya, Raja Gambera Pandya succeeded Rajesa Pandya, Vangya Deepa succeeded Raja Gambera, Purandarajit succeeded Purandarajit and Sundaresa Padhasekhara succeeded Pandivangya Athaka.

Sundaresa Padhasekhara Pandya was an ardent devotee of the Lord of Madurai. He slashed his army budget and spent more in renovating the temple of Lord Somasundareswara. He extended the temple. He bought costly ornaments for the Lord and goddess Meenakshi.

The contemporary Chola King, Aayiram Parikk Sevakam, encouraged by the small size of the Pandyan army, invaded Madurai with a big army. The Pandya prayed unto Lord Somasundareswara and the Lord assured him that he would himself fight and secure victory for the Pandya.

The Pandya then marched his army to the battle field and though it was a tiny one when compared to the Chola army, by the grace of the Lord, it appeared to be as huge as an Ocean to the eyes of the Chola armed forces.

The Lord took the form of a cavalry officer and was seen in the forefront of the Pandyan army. The Chola King charged him but throwing a spear at him, the Lord made the Chola run away. The Lord also disappeared from sight immediately. The Pandya King chased the fleeing Chola and the latter turning back saw that the cavalry officer was not in the field. Heartened by this, he returned to the battle with all his might. Now it was the Pandya's turn to run and the Chola's to chase. In their mad rush, both fell into a deep pit and Chola king died while the Pandya, by the Lord's grace, came out of it alive.

38. A SUDRA GIVEN A VESSEL FILLED WITH GINGILLY SEEDS

There was a Vellala by name Adiyaruku Nallan in Madurai. His wife was Dharma Seelai and they were both charitably disposed. His net income from farming after the payment of the tax, was wholly utilised to feed the devotees of the Lord.

Lord Somasundareswara, in order to show the world the mettle of Adiyaruku Nallan, caused his farm income to decrease. Still, the farmer raised loans and went on feeding the devotees. In due course, he could not even raise loans. As he and his

wife would not touch food until they had fed the devotees, they both starved as they could not feed the devotees for want of resources.

He and his wife, therefore, prayed unto the Lord asking him to show a creditor who would lend money and vowed that other-wise they would not touch food until they had fed the devotees. The Lord told him that by his grace the farmer would find in his house a granary full of first quality rice and that he would find it inexhaustive also. The farmer used the rice for feeding the devotees and in due course he and his wife attained the feet of the Lord.

39. A VAISYA BOY GIVEN VICTORY IN A SUIT

There was a merchant in Madurai by name Dhanapathi. He was fabulously rich, he had a beautiful and dutiful wife by name Suseela. They had no offspring and so Dhanapathi adopted his sister's son and the couple brought up the boy with great care and affection. However, ill feelings between him and his sister arose frequently. Once the sister wounded his feelings by saying that he had a cursed life and he was denied a son and she had to go to his rescue by giving her son in adoption to him. Dhanapathi, therefore, decided to enter Vanaprashtha Ashrama and do penance so that atleast in future births he might not have such a cursed life. He accordingly left all property to his adopted son and sent away with his wife to do penance.

After he left, his Dhayadhies (paternal cousins etc.) unlawfully deprived the adopted son of all his

properties. The adopted son's mother, who had no other support, prayed to the Lord for succour. The Lord appeared in her dream as a Brahmin and advised her to complain to the king's Dharma sabha against the usurpers.

Next day, she went to the usurpers and asked them in the king's name to appear before the Dharma sabha for settlement of the dispute. They, however, threatened her. She therefore, approached the Dharma sabha and complained. The Sabha secured the presence of the defendants. The Lord then appeared in the form of Dhanapathi becoming the perpetrator of injustice with impunity by the Dhayadhies. He embraced his sister and the adopted son and lamented them by saying that the property was earned in the lawful manner and such property would not be lost but would come back to them. He addressed the sabha and asked for justice. The sabha after enquiring into the matter decided that the Dhayadhi had not a case. Then the Dhayadhies entered upon a new plea that the person present in the sabha was not the real Dhanapathi. The Lord immediately to prove his bonafides, mentioned several incidents in the family life of the Dhayadhies, details of their properties etc. The sabha was impressed with the statements and concluded that he was the real Dhanapathi. The Dhayadhies went away crest-fallen. The sabha arranged for the return of the properties to the adopted son. Then the Lord suddenly disappeared from the sabha's presence. All those present and the king also thereby came to know that it was the Lord who had appeared as Dhanapathi in the sabha.

40. REDEEMER OF THE PANDYA KING FROM THE SIN OF BRAHMAHATYA

Sundaresa Padha Sekhara Pandya was succeeded by his son Varaguna Pandya to the throne. Varaguna Pandya was an ardent devotee of Lord Siva. The qualities of his head and heart were renowned. Once he went to the forest on a hunting expedition. On his return at sunset, his horse unwittingly set its foot on a Brahmin who was sleeping and the Brahmin died instantaneously. But the king was not aware of this. The relatives of the dead Brahmin brought the corpse to the king and told him of what had really happened. The king was remorseful and recompensed them amply. Even so, he became subject to Brahmahathi Dosha.

He tried his best to get rid of the Dosha and observed various Vratas, Dharmas, Homas etc. But he was not relieved of it. He, therefore, prostrated before Lord Somasundareswara and prayed for the eradication of the Dosha. The Lord told him that soon the Chola king would invade Madurai and would be defeated by the Pandya king who would then chase the fleeing Chola and reach Thiruvidadaimaruthur. (known as Madya Arjuna Kshetra). In that place, the Lord would eradicate the Brahmahathi.

The events happened as stated by the Lord. When Varagunapandya reached Thiruvidadaimaruthur, he bathed in the Cauvery and went to the temple to worship the Lord. As he entered the eastern gate of the temple,

the Brahmahathi, which was dogging his footsteps till then, left him. The king had darshan of Lord Siva in the Linga form inside the temple and expressed his gratitude for the eradication of the Dosha. The Lord said that Brahmahathi was staying in the eastern gate and asked him not to return by that gate. The king constructed the western Gopuram of the temple and made several donations to the temple. On his return to Madurai, he continued worshipping Lord Siva as usual. On a Mahasivarathri night, while he was worshipping the Lord, he expressed his desire to see Sivaloka. The Lord was pleased and immediately made Sivaloka appear there and asked Nandhikeswara to show Sivaloka to the king. Accordingly, Nandhikeswara took the king round and showed Sivaloka to the King.

By the grace of Lord, the king was able to see the grandeur of the Sivaloka, the places where Brahma and Vishnu, the Rudras, and devotees of Lord Siva were respectively ensconced. Nandhikeswara then showed to him Lord Siva in all His glory, surrounded by Brahma, Vishnu, the eight Dik Palakas, the Vedas, Sivaganas, Siddhas and others. Then, suddenly the Sivaloka disappeared from the king's sight and he saw the Madurai city there as usual.

The Rishi's to whom Agastya was describing Leela asked Agastya why the Lord of Madurai decided to eradicate the Brahmahathi Dosha of the king at Thiruvudaimuruthur instead of Madurai. Agastya replied that the Lord Siva wished that the citizens of Madurai should not commit sins at all and hence the Lord made the expiation of the king's sin take place in Thiruvudaimuruthur.

41. CARRYING FIRE WOOD TO SAVE THE DEVOTEE NAMED BANABHADRA

During the reign of Varaguna Pandya, Yemanathan, a musician of great repute and an expert in playing the stringed instrument called "Yaazh" came to Madurai from the north. He played the instrument in the king's court. Consequently, Yemanathan became arrogant and proud. The king who did not like this, asked another court musician called Banabhadra whether he could challenge Yemanathan and excel him. He humbly proposed to do so and a date was fixed for the contest. That day, Banabhadra, the court musician heard the disciples of Yemanathan sing and, judging by the standards displayed by them, became worried if he could beat their master. Being a pious man and devotee of Lord Siva, he prayed unto Lord Somasundareswara for success in the contest.

That day, Lord Somasundareswara took the form of an old and emaciated seller of firewood dressed in rags and wearing wornout shoes. He had hung over his shoulders the "Yaazh" instrument put in an old cover. He arrived at the door of Yemanathan that evening. Keeping the load of firewood on his head, he played his instrument, on the outer yard of Yemanathan's house. Yemanathan was struck with the excellence of the music played and made enquires about him. The Lord told him that he wanted to be a pupil of Banabhadra in music but the latter had rejected him as being too old and ineligible. Hence he had to seek other means of livelihood and became a seller of firewood. Yemanathan

wanted the Lord to play the tune once again and the Lord sang the tune to the accompaniment of the instrument. Yemanathan was completely enchanted with the music and he forgot himself in ecstasy. Just then the Lord disappeared with the "Yaazh" and the bundle of firewood.

When Yemanathan regained his self, he realised that, if they player of such divine music had been rejected by Banabhadra, the standard of Banabhadra's own music would be so high that it would be foolish on his part to enter into a contest with Banabhadra. So, the same night, he and his pupils ran away from Madurai.

The Lord appeared in Banabhadra's dream that night and apprised him of what had been done by the Lord to protect his interests. Banabhadra woke up early next morning and worshipped the Lord in the temple and prayed to be forgiven for having caused to the Lord such trouble. Then he went to the king. Meanwhile, the king's messengers who had gone to fetch Yemanathan, reported that he had fled.

Banabhadra also narrated what the Lord had done for him. The king honoured Banabhadra suitably and told him that as he had been sincere in his devotion to the Lord, he should stay singing only in praise of the Lord. He relieved him of his duties as court singer

42. WRITING A LETTER TO THE CHERA KING ON BEHALF OF BANABHADRA

Banabhadra used to sing before the Lord in the temple thrice daily. He gave up all other activities. Hence he became poor. The Lord took pity on him and secretly

transferred cash, gold, and other valuables from the king's treasury to Banabhadra's house. Banabhadra used them partly for his sustenance and doled out the rest to his relatives and others.

After sometime, the Lord stopped transferring such valuables from the king's treasury and Banabhadra again became poor. One day the Lord appeared in his dream and said that he had decided to do so lest the king should put the guards of the treasury to trouble. However, in order to help Banabhadra, the Lord said, he would give a note to the Chera king, who was also an ardent devotee of the Lord, and a command to give enough wealth to Banabhadra. Banabhadra took that valuable note with him to the Chera king. Enroute, he stayed in a water stall in Thiruvanjikkalam, a famous Saivite kshetra. That night, the Lord of Madurai appeared in the dream of the Chera king and asked him to give sufficient riches to Banabhadra. The king searched for Banabhadra and located him in the water stall. The king immediately went with his regal retinue to the water stall and prostrated before Banabhadra. He then received the divine note carried by Banabhadra and placed it on a golden pedestal on the elephant's back. Banabhadra also climbed on to the elephant's back. The king followed him. The king greatly honoured the musician and laid the entire contents of his treasury at Banabhadra's disposal. But the latter accepted riches required for his sustenance and then returned to Madurai. The king followed him for a considerable distance with great respect and then took leave of him.

Lord Somasundereswara regularly in the temple. The king's concubine suggested to him that a rival musician should be engaged to sing and Banabhadra's wife should be humiliated.

Accordingly the king got a singer from ceylon and asked her if she would accept a challenge from the singer from Ceylon. She readily agreed.

Next day, the two musicians arrived for the contest. The Ceylon musician at the outset asked Banabhadra's wife some questions about the science of music. Banabhadra's wife refused to indulge in such discussions and proposed the condition that the person defeated in the contest should become the servant of the winner.

The contest took place and the audience which was inclined to consider Banabhadra's wife to be the winner noticed that the king was inclined the other way and changed their view in accordance with that of the king. The king said that the result of the contest could not be judged on the basis of a single sitting and asked the contestants to continue the contest the next day also. Banabhadra's wife became aware of the leanings of the king and was worried. She prayed unto Lord Somasundareswara and the Lord assured her that He would help her to become the winner in the adjourned session of the contest.

During the next day's contest things happened as on the earlier day. Banabhadra's wife told the king that, because he showed unfair leaning to the rival, the audience also followed him and that it would be but fair if

sundareswara. Even if one person boldly announced the winner in the presence of the Lord, that verdict should be accepted. The king agreed.

The audience and the king reached the Lord's sanctum. Lord Somasundareswara also took the form of an expert musician and joined the audience. The king, after hearing both the musicians, though inclined to favour the Ceylon musician, pronounced Banabhadra's wife the winner due to the grace of the Lord who changed the king's mind. The king also ordered that Banabhadra's wife should be placed on the shoulders of the defeated musician, the Lord who was in the audience loudly applauded the king's verdict and instantly disappeared from the scene. The king realised that this was the Lord's Leela once again and trembled at the thought of the unfair part he had played earlier in regard to the contest. He made suitable presents to both the contestants and also presented various ornaments to adorn the Lord's image in the temple.

45. ASSUMED THE FORM OF SOW AND SAVED THE OFFSPRINGS

Goddess Meenakshi asked the Lord how he decided to become a she-pig to feed the young pigs. He replied that as the Lord of all the Universe, He never viewed the various animate beings differently. Everything was equal to him. Hence it was necessary that He should render such help to the piglings. As they were fed by Him, they had attained enormous strength and wisdom and they were going to become the Pandya king's ministers and later Siva Ganas.

The Lord appeared in the Pandya's dream and asked him to appoint the twelve young men with pig's faces found in Panri Malai as his ministers. The Lord also said that they were wise and learned and fit to be ministers. The king did accordingly and also arranged for their marriage with the daughters of earlier ministers.

The ministers were able to run the administration wisely and according to the wishes of the king. They were able to win over enemies by their suave manners and genial conversations according to the principles of Dharma. Tax collection was effected. In short, the kingdom experienced great prosperity during their regime.

In due course, they passed away and became Siva Ganas living in Siva Loka.

46. SMALL PIGS MADE AS MINISTERS

To the south of the river Vaigai in Madurai, there is a place called Guruvirundha Thurai where Bruhaspathi, the Devaguru, observed penance to get the favour of Lord Siva and got the blessings of the Lord. The Lord also assumed the name of Gurunathan and established himself there.

Sukalan, a vellala, and Sukalai, his wife, lived in that place. They had twelve sons. After the death of the parents, the children were brought up properly and they joined a gang of hunters. One day, when Lord Bruhaspathi was meditating in the forest, the twelve sons of the Vellala threw mud and stones and disturbed Bruhaspathi's meditation. Bruhaspathi cursed them to be

born as pigs and, lose their parents also. On their anxious enquiry, he said that the curse would lapse when Lord Siva would feed them. The twelve hunters accordingly were born as pigs.

Rajaraja Pandya went on a hunting expedition. In the expedition the parent pigs died leaving the twelve young pigs. The place where the pigs died is now called "Panri Malai" and many yogis used to live in the mountain. Agastya, who was narrating these Leelas to the Rishis, told them that the king pig, father of the twelve pigs, was formerly a Vindyardhara, that he was cursed by Pulastya Rishi to become a pig as he hindered the Rishi's Tapas and that, when the curse lapsed on his being killed by the Pandya king, the place of his death would become sacred and yogis would reside there.

The young pigs, having lost their parents, were unfed. They were too young to help themselves. The Lord Somasundareswara and Parvathi Devi who were then going in thier celestial vimana above the forest, noticed the young pigs, and, out of compassion, the Lord became a she-pig and suckled the young ones. The young pigs were then transformed into human beings with their faces alone continuing to be pig's faces.

47. INSTRUCTING A KHANJARITA BIRD

Rajaraja Pandya was succeeded by his son Suguna Pandya to the throne. During his reign, a man who has done many good things in his life was born as a small sparrow on account of some small sin committed

The sparrow was frequently attacked by the crows and other birds and it was put to immense trouble. It, therefore, flew into the forest and was concealing itself on a big tree in full bloom.

One day, an ardent devotee of Lord Siva was telling some others underneath the tree in question that all living creatures would achieve all their noble aspirations in Madurai city by bathing in the Golden Lotus Tank and by worshipping Lord Somasundareswara who would shower benefits both in present life and in the life-to-be unlike the Lords of other places, who would confer benefits only in the life to be. The sparrow heard this and decided to go to Madurai and attain salvation.

After going to Madurai, it bathed in the Golden Lotus Tank daily and worshipped Lord Somasundareswara. After three days, Goddess Meenakshi asked the Lord about this sparrow. The Lord told her its history and taking kind notice of the sparrow, instructed it in Mrityunjaya Mantra which had helped Markandeya to become immortal.

The sparrow thanked the Lord and said that, as it was a weak bird, other birds troubled it. The Lord made it a strong bird. The sparrow also prayed that this boon should apply to all of its species and the Lord granted this request also. The sparrow then diligently chanted the Mantra taught to it and in due course attained the Lord's feet.

48. A SARARI BIRD GRANTED WITH SALVATION

In the southern part of the Pandya Kingdom, there was a town. There was a beautiful tank in it. It was full of lotus flowers. A crane lived on the banks of the tank. It eked out its livelihood taking fish from the tank.

Due to drought, the tank went dry once. The crane, therefore, wandered in search of food and found a big tank called Sandya Matam in a forest. A great devotee of Lord Siva was living near by and he was known as 'Satyan'. There were also several other Tapasvins in the forest. All of them used to bathe in the tank. The crane saw that, while they bathed, the fish in the tank often went in and out of the Jata (twisted hair) of the Tapasvins. The crane felt that the fish were extremely lucky to be able to come into physical contact with such noble souls and decided that it should not eat fish in that tank.

After taking their bath and completing their ablutions, the Tapasvins used to gather and discourse on the sacredness of Madurai and the Golden Lotus Tank therein and the efficacy of the worship of Lord Somasundareswara which paved the way for the emancipation of the soul. The crane took its cue from these discourses and flew to Madurai, bathed in the Golden Lotus Tank and worshipped the Lord.

After fifteen days, the crane which was hungry was tempted to eat the fish in the sacred tank but immediately, on account of the Lord's grace gave up the idea considering it to be a sin to take fish in the tank. The Lord then appeared before it and asked what it

wanted. The crane prayed that it should give up its life and join the Sivaloka and that fish should not breed in the Golden Lotus Tank lest other crane of its species should have the temptation to eat them and thus commit a heinous sin. The Lord granted both the boons. Consequently, the crane was taken to Sivaloka in a celestial Vimana and the Golden Lotus Tank became bereft of fish.

49. BOUNDARIES OF MADHURAPURA

SHOWN BY SERPENT

After Suguna Pandya, Twenty two generations passed and the king of the Twenty third generation was Kirthi Bhooshana Pandya.

During his reign the Deluge occurred and the entire world was obliterated except the temples of Lord Somasundareswara and Goddess Meenakshi, the Golden Lotus Tank, Brishaba Mountain, Elephant mountain, Naga Mountain, Cow mountain and Pig mountain. Then the world emerged again by the grace of Lord Siva and the ruling dynasties of Chera, Chola, and Pandyas also came into being again. Vangya Sekhara was the Pandya king after the deluge. He formed a small city around the Lord's temple. But owing to the great prosperity that prevailed then, the population increased greatly and the city had to be extended considerably to accommodate all the people. The king, therefore, prayed to the Lord to show him the old, boundary of the ancient city which remained undisclosed. The Lord took the form of a Siddha Purusha and appeared before the king. The Siddha Purusha wore a number of snakes on his body as

ornaments. The Siddha ordered the snake on his wrist indicate the boundary of the city. The cobra prayed to Lord Somasundareswaran (Siddha) that the city named after it and the Siddha said it would be done.

The cobra then enclosed an area with its body show the declination of the boundary of the city and then again wound itself around the Siddha's wrist. The Siddha Purusha disappeared from the scene and entered the temple of the Lord. The king had the fort walls erected along the boundary indicated by the snake. The city therefore, came to be called ALAVOYNAGAR and the fort 'ALAVOY MADHIL' (snake city and snake fort).

50. WAGING BATTLE WITH ARROW ENGRAVED WITH 'SUNDARESAN'

Once Vikrama Chola invaded the Pandya kingdom which was ruled by Vangya Sekhara Pandya. The Chola forces forcibly removed many heads of cattle, broke the banks of many tanks and plundered the merchandise brought to Madurai. The Pandyan army was too small compared to the Chola army which was also reinforced by the armies of several other chieftains to the north. The Pandya king therefore, prayed unto Lord Somasundareswara to help him overcome the difficulty. The Lord asked the king to meet the enemy in the battlefield and assured him that he would join him at the appropriate time and earn him his victory. The king was happy. When he returned from the temple, he was informed that the enemy forces had approached the Vrishaba mountain near the city. The battle began at

soon the large forces of the Chola-overpowered those of the Pandya and the latter fled in disorder. The Chola king blew his trumpet to indicate his victory.

The Lord then appeared in the guise of a warrior and led the Pandyan forces back to the battle field. The Lord's arrow on which the name "Sundaresan" was engraved caused untold destruction to the enemy's forces. The Chola king was surprised how a single arrow could cause such havoc. He saw the engraving on the arrow and concluded that Lord Somasundareshwara would have helped the Pandya. He, therefore, retired with the remnants of his army from the battle field.

But the allies stopped him and they all returned to the battle field. Their efforts were in vain, for, by the grace of the Lord, their arrows were all destroyed by the Lord and the Lord's own arrows slaughtered the enemy's forces. The allies of the Chola king also died in the encounter. The Chola king, therefore, fled with the remnants of his forces. The Lord then disappeared from the scene. The Pandya out of immense gratitude to the Lord made various endowments to the Lord's temple in which were included a bow and arrow of gold and gems with the engraving "Sundaresan".

51. DRAVIDIAN SCHOLARS GIVEN

THE SANGHAM PLANK

During the reign of Vangya Sekhara Pandya, Brahma performed ten Aswamedha yagnas in the DASASWAMEDHAGHAT on the banks of the Ganges in Varanasi, on the completion of the yagna, Brahma with

his wives Saraswathi, Savithri and Gayatri went to the Ganges for bath. Saraswathi lagged behind the other a bit as she was absorbed in the song of a celestial maid who was soaring in the sky above. Brahma and the other two had completed their bath before Saraswathi arrived. Saraswathi grew angry at this and chided Brahma. Brahma pointed out that the fault was hers and for having committed the sin of indulging in such unrighteous anger, he cursed Her to have several births on the earth as a human being. Saraswathi was shocked. Brahma now paused a bit and added in explanation of his curse that the Forty eight letters from "Akaram" to "Hakaram" (First to the forty eight letters of the Sanskrit alphabet) would become forty eight poets and Lord Somasundareswara of Madurai would also become the forty ninth poet and pervade the minds of the forty eight poets thereby giving them perfect knowledge and thus develop poesy in Tamil.

The forty eight poets were accordingly born and they had full knowledge of the various languages and chose the Tamil language as the vehicle for expressing their ideas in verse form. They were ardent devotees of Lord Siva and frequently toured various parts of the country to establish their scholarship. They finally reached Madurai. Lord Somasundareswara in the guise of a poet welcomed them and took them to the temple and made them worship the Lord. Then he disappeared from their presence. The poets realised that it was the Lord who had been with them all the while and sang many poems in his praise.

Then they went to the Pandya king. The king was struck with their great scholarly attainments, gave them various presents and constructed a

“Sanga Mantap” to the north west of the temple of the Lord to house the poets. The original poets of Madurai and those of other regions were thereby sad at this development but they were not able to score over the forty eight Sanga poets in any contests of literary skill.

The Sanga poets then prayed to Lord Somasundareswara to give them a “Sanga plank” which would indicate the relative merits of two or more contesting poets as such contests were frequently occurring. The Lord appeared in the guise of poet with a plank a cubic square in dimensions and informed them that it would so extend itself as to give accomodation to really meritorious poets at the rate of one cubit in length for each poet. The plank would thus be an infallible judge of the merits of a poet. The poets accepted the plank with gratitude and installed it in the Sanga Mantap. They offered puja to the divine plank and then the poets took their seats on it. As each of them ascended it, it grew length by a cubit to accomodate him. Thus it accomodated all of them.

Lord Somasundara now appeared before them in the guise of a poet and asked 48 poets to show to him those poems which had baffled their understanding and easily explained them to the poets and cleared all their doubts. The poets were grateful and asked him to take his seat on the plank along with them. The Lord did so and become the forty ninth poet and the most important of them all.

52. WRITING A VERSE FOR A BRAHMIN AT THE INSTANCE OF THE PANDYA KING

Vangya Sekhara Pandya was succeeded to the throne by his son Vangya Choodamani. He was an ardent devotee of Lord Somasundareswara and raised several gardens, one of them being full of the Shenbaga flowers. They had great perfume and smell, and were used for adorning the Lord. The king supervised their maintenance personally and took particular pleasure in having darshan of the Lord after bedecking His form with Shenbaga flowers and garlands. The king therefore, came to be called Shenbaga Pandya and the Lord Shenbaga Sundara.

During the spring, the king Shenbaga Pandya and his queen were staying in an artificial Mantap in a beautiful park enjoying the cool breeze and smell of the choicest flowers in the park. Then, he experienced a different but far superior smell about him. He found out that the smell emanated from the tuft of the Queen's hair. He was perplexed if the smell was natural to the hair or artificial. He wanted to ascertain the truth.

The king, therefore, announced that he would present a thousand gold pieces to the poet who could compose the best poem which would clear his doubt. The poets took up the challenge but were unable to fathom the king's mind and locate the subject of his thoughts.

Dharmi, a young Brahmachari of the Aadhi Saiva sect, prayed unto Lord Somasundareswara to win the prize so that he might get a suitable bride and thereby become eligible to perform puja unto the Lord. His specific prayer was that the Lord should be pleased to compose a poem for him on the subject dominating the king's mind and enable him to win the prize, thereby to celebrate his marriage, the Lord obliged him having a poem for him.

Dharmi produced the poem to the court of the poets. they approved of it and extolled its excellence to the king. The king was fully satisfied with it and ordered that the gold be presented to Dharmi. When Dharmi went to the sanga Mantap to collect the prize Nakkeerar, a Sanga poet, stalled the prize on the ground that the poem was faulty.

Dharmi complained to Lord Somasundareswara and lamented the fact that an ordinary poet should find fault with the poem composed by the Lord Himself.

The Lord then appeared at the Sanga Mantap in the guise of a poet and enquired who found fault with his poem. Nakkeerar owned it himself. He said that it was structurally and grammatically alright, but there was a flaw in the concept. The concept, in short, was that the hair of certain types of women had natural scent. Nakkeerar denied this. The Lord asked Nakkeerar whether the hair of Goddess Gnaanaprasoonambika of Kaalahasthi whom the poet Nakkeerar worshipped did not have a natural scent. Nakkeerar denied this also. Then the Lord slightly opened His third eye (in the forehead) and Nakkeerar still maintained that the Lord's poem was faulty. He used strong language and stated

that, even if the Lord should have eyes all over His body, and burnt him, the fault was a fault. Unable to bear the fiery look of the Lord, he sank into the Golden Lotus Tank (the third eye of Lord Siva being Agni) The Lord then disappeared from the scene.

53. RESUSCITATION OF NAKKEERAR

As Nakkeerar was the greatest of all the Sanga poets, the other poets were very much troubled by what had happened to him. At the same time, they realised that Nakkeerar's attitude was impertinent and therefore, they did not know what to do. Finally, they approached the Lord in the hope that He would forgive him even as He forgave Ravana though the latter had given much greater offence to the Lord in that he audaciously attempted to dislocate Mount Kailas, the Lord's abode. They prayed to the Lord to forgive Nakkeerar.

The Lord appeared with Goddess Meenakshi on the bank of the Golden Lotus Tank and with his grace revived Nakkeerar. Nakkeerar to atone for his fault, composed a hundred stanzas eulogising Mount Kailas and kalahasthi in alternate stanzas to denote that kalahasthi was equal to kailas. As originally he had refused to concede that the hair of the Goddess of Kalahasthi would have a natural scent, he had given such importance to kalahasthi in the stanzas. The Lord was pleased and lifted Nakkeerar up with his own hands out of the tank. Nakkeerar then also composed several stanzas praising the Lord for His magnanimity in condoning even heinous offences in several cases during the past. The Lord then allowed Nakkeerar to continue

as a Sanga poet and disappeared from the scene. Nakkeerar and the other poets then allowed Dharmi to collect the prize.

54. NAKKEERAR BEING TAUGHT

SUTRAS (APHORISMS)

Nakkeerar, thereafter, realised that, while Manmatha was burnt to ashes when the Lord Siva looked at him with his third eye, he himself was saved by the Golden Lotus Tank into which he sank when the Lord opened His third eye. He, therefore, used to bathe in the tank thrice a day and then worshipped the Lord. The Lord was pleased with the devotion of Nakkeerar and desired to teach him the intricacies of grammar and was considering whom to depute for accomplishing the task.

Goddess Meenakshi reminded the Lord that Agastya was once taught the grammar of the Tamil language by the Lord and that he could be deputed to instruct Nakkeera. Once, when all the Devas and Rishis had gathered in Mount kailas, the equilibrium of the world was disturbed and the Devas suggested to the Lord that if a person like the Lord himself could be stationed in the Southwest direction, the world would regain its equilibrium. The Lord at once said that Agastya and his wife Lobamudra alone could be considered to be like himself and Goddess Parvathi and therefore, asked Agastya to go with his wife to the south-west. Agastya requested the Lord to teach him Tamil since the language of the place to which he had been deputed was the same. The Lord accordingly taught him the

entire grammar of that language. The Lord recollected all these and concurred with the suggestion of Goddess Meenakshi.

Agastya became instantly aware of the Lord's intention and he and his wife arrived at Madurai. Then Nakkeerar also came to worship the Lord. the Lord pointed Nakkeerar to Agastya and asked the latter to give instruction to Nakkeerar in Tamil grammar. Agastya accomplished the task and the Lord blessed him.

Goddess Meenakshi desired to know why the Lord, instead of instructing Nakkeerar directly, utilised the services of Agastya for the purpose and the Lord said that, as Nakkeerar had once adamantly refused to agree with him (the Lord), it was proper that the instruction came from a third person. Nakkeerar, with the full knowledge of grammar obtained from Agastya, reexamined all his previous compositions, and realised the grammatical faults in them and repented for his uninformed tussle with the Lord. Thereafter, the ardour of his devotion to the Lord increased.

He, in his turn, instructed the other poets in the grammar of Tamil language.

55. MADE A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THESES

Each of the forty eight Sanga poets composed various poetical works and in their evaluation, they differed among themselves. Hence they approached Lord Somasundareswara and prayed that their difference be settled. The Lord appeared before them as a poet and told them that a merchant of Madurai by name

Dhanapathi had a dumb son who was an Avataar of Lord Subramanya and He would give decision upon the best composition. The Lord also set their doubts at rest saying that the dumb son of Dhanapathi would clearly indicate by physical gestures such as nodding of the head and expressing joy when he saw the best composition.

The merchant's son was brought to the Sanga Mantap and the various compositions of the poets were shown to him. He expressed great joy only when he heard the compositions of Nakkeerar, Kapilar and Paranar. This set at rest the controversy among the poets and the compositions of the three poets approved by the dumb judge became famous and obtained wide circulation.

56. IDAIKKATTU PULAVAR'S COMPLAINT AGAINST THE KING

After the death of Senbaga Pandya, fourteen kings successively ruled the kingdom. The fifteenth was Kulesa Pandya. He was himself a great scholar and hence the Sanga plank offered accommodation to him. Once a poet known as Idaikkattu pulavar, a friend of poet Kapilar, produced before the king Kulesa a composition of his for approval. Though the work was excellent on all counts, the king, out of jealousy, did not pass it through the sages. The Poet therefore, went to Lord Somasundareswara and complained. Then he went towards the north. The Lord, in order to teach the Pandya a lesson, left the temple with Goddess Meenakshi and took his abode in another temple to the

south of the Vaigai river bank. The Linga form in the Madurai temple also vanished. The Sanga poets also shifted their residence to a place nearer to the new temple.

The devotees who went to the temple for worship found the Linga missing and told the Pandya king about it. The king was struck with grief hearing this and did not know what to do. Just then, the king got information about the new temple that had arisen over night on the South bank of the Vaigai and the presence of Lord Somasundareswara and Goddess Meenakshi and the Sanga poets there. The king proceeded to that temple, prayed to the Lord expressing his profound regret at what had happened. The Lord announced that, as the king had failed to give his approbation to the composition of Idaikkattu pulavar, He came to the new temple. Henceforth it should be called North Thiruvaalavoi. The king again begged the pardon of the Lord and the Lord and Goddess Meenakshi once again entered the temple at Madurai.

The king then made various presents to the Idaikkattu pulavar and also apologised to the Sanga poets for his arrogant behaviour.

57. LORD SIVA BECOMING

A FISHER MAN

Once, Lord Somasundareswara was explaining to Goddess Meenakshi the secret of the Vedas. The Goddess, who was listening to the Lord, however, seemed to be beset with some anxiety and engrossed otherwise. It was, therefore, apparent that she was

listening only nonchalantly. The Lord noticed this and said that as she was not paying full attention to the important things discoursed by him, she should be born in the fisherman's community. The Goddess lamented this and the Lord assured Her that she would be born to the king of Fishermen and that He (The Lord) would in due course come to wed her.

Ganapathi and Subramanya, the sons of the Lord were greatly perturbed by this and they in their frenzy considered the books of the vedas to be the cause of the trouble and threw the offending books into the sea. The Lord took Nandhikeswara to task for having allowed Vinayaka and Subramanya to go to him without knowing his convenience and cursed him to become a shark in the sea. Any curse on Ganapathi would recoil on Him (The Lord) and hence the Lord did not impose any curse on Ganapathi. Subramanya was cursed to become the dumb son of a merchant.

There was a place called Paakam on the Eastern seashore of Pandya kingdom. It was inhabited by fishermen and their king was a great devotee of Lord Siva. He had no children. One day, when he went to the sea for fishing, he found a girl child lying under a tree on the seashore and crying. He picked it up with great joy and handed it over to his wife saying that it was the gift of the Lord. His wife brought up the child very affectionately and adorned it with various jewels. The child grew to be a girl and was always meditating on Lord Siva. Nandhikeswara became a shark in the sea as ordained by the Lord and frequently caused a lot of havoc to the Fishermen's boats sailing in the sea. The king of the fishermen took considerable pains to catch

the shark but in vain. He, therefore, announced that he would give his daughter in marriage to any person who would catch the shark.

Lord Somasundareswara appeared in the guise of a young fisherman before the king of fishermen who was struck with the personality and bearing of the young new comer. To the king's enquiry, He replied that He was a fisherman from Madurai and that He could net any big fish or shark. The king apprised Him of the prize offered for netting the shark infesting the area. The newcomer went to the sea and in no time netted the shark. The king and all his men were astonished at the feat. He happily gave the newcomer his daughter in marriage and celebrated the wedding immediately. The bride and bridegroom immediately appeared as Siva and Parvathi on their Vrishaba Mount and the shark also appeared as Nandhikeswara. The king of the fishermen prayed unto the God extolling Him for the great kindness shown to a very ordinary and illiterate man like him. The Lord told him that as he had been yearning to get a child for long, He was pleased to send Parvathi as his daughter and in due course He came to wed her. The Lord also blessed the king to have all prosperity and at the end of his life to become a denizen of Sivaloka. The Lord, Parvathi and Nandhikeswara then entered the Uttarakosamangai Kshetra in Ramanathapuram District. Then the Lord instructed Parvathi about the secret of the import of the Vedas and she eagerly and earnestly listened to the discourse. The discourse was also heard by thousand Sivayogis and devotees. Then the Lord and Parvathi entered the Madurai temple as Lord Somasundareswara and Goddess Meenakshi.

58. INSTRUCTING VAADHAVUR ADIGAL

There was a place called Thiruvaadhavur on the bank of the river Vaigai. It was quite prosperous and the people were learned and cultured. In that place Thiruvaadhavurar was born in a Brahmin family which traditionally provided ministers to the king. Thiruvaadhavurar was quite smart in his studies and he soon became an accomplished young man. The Pandya king Arimardhana, heard about his attainments and appointed him as his minister. On being appointed a minister, he made a special study of the literature on statecraft and he became a shrewd diplomat. He was, therefore, the chief confidant to the king. Through his efforts, peaceful relations prevailed between the Pandya and the neighbouring rulers.

But, though ensconced in the highest position in the kingdom he had no mundane desires. His mind always dwelt on the philosophical plane. His study of the various religions in vogue made it clear to him that salvation of the human soul could be achieved only with the help of preceptor. He was an ardent devotee to Lord Siva and constantly prayed to Him for the arrival of a preceptor to lift him up from the bonds of mundane life.

The king's cavalry forces required the replacement of a large number of horses which had become old and ill. The king entrusted the task of purchasing the horses to Vaadhavuraar and gave him sufficient funds for the purpose. Before leaving for the sea coast for the purchase of horses, he worshipped

Lord Somasundareswara and prayed that he should ordain that the money with him should be utilised for the benefit of the devotees of the Lord.

When he reached Thirupperundurai, he took his bath in the temple. There he found underneath a tree a learned preceptor and a large number of His disciples. They were none other than Lord Siva and those whose souls had already been emancipated by Lord siva. Vaadhavurar bowed to the Preceptor and the latter taught him the Panchakshara Mahamantra. As the preceptor was Lord Siva Himself, Vaadhavurar immediately felt a transformation and completely forgot himself and his errand. He praised the Lord from the bottom of his heart. The Lord was pleased and called him Maanikkavaachakar (One who spoke words equal to gems). Maanikkavaachakar became one among the disciples and was listening intently to the discussions held. Those discussions were concerned with the union of the human soul with that of the Lord. The Lord after sometime told Maanikkavaachakar that he should be in the world for some more time in order to accomplish certain tasks and then He disappeared with His disciples. Maanikkavaachakar was struck with indescribable grief at his being left behind.

He then sent back his attendants and assistants to Madurai with instructions to inform the Pandya king that the horses would arrive in a few monts time. They told the Pandya king accordingly and the king was waiting for the arrival of horses.

Maanikkavaachakar spent all the money he had brought on improvements of temple and on feeding the devotees.

The time specified by Maanikkavachakar had expired, but the horses did not come. So the king sent a messenger to Maanikkavachakar with a note enquiring the reasons for the delay. Maanikkavaachakar did not know what to do. He prayed unto the Lord indicating his predicament. The Lord told him to send a reply to the king stating that the horses would come. The same night the Lord appeared in Maanikkavaachakar's dream in the form of the preceptor known to Maanikavaachakar and asked him to return to Madurai immediately. The Lord said He would follow with the required horses. Maanikkavaachakar returned to Madurai and personally reported to the king that the horses were following and would arrive soon. He also went to the temple and prayed unto Lord Somasundareswara. The Lord reassured him that He was bringing the best horses. Maanikkavachakar's relatives took him to task for what he had done and told him that his actions would only result in difficulties for all of them if the horses did not arrive. Maanikkavaachakar however, said nothing to them as he had, on account of his great good fortune in having had Lord Siva Himself as his Preceptor, divested his mind of all mundane things and was only waiting for deliverance from the world.

59. SOLD MAGIC HORSES TO THE PANDYAN KING

The horses didn't arrive and the king was enraged. He ordered that Maanikkavaachakar should be chastised and the money entrusted to him should be got back. A heavy stone was placed on his head and his feet

were squeezed with some contraptions. During the night, he was jailed and chained. Maanickkavaachakar bore all those troubles without a murmur and was constantly praying unto the Lord.

The Lord ordered Nandhikeswara and other members of the Sivaganas to transform jackals into horses and to transform themselves into horse riders and drive them to the king. He also would ride a horse and be in the group. Accordingly, a large number of horses with riders led by the leader (the Lord), who was riding a horse at the head of the party, arrived at Madurai. Maanikkavaachakar informed the king of this. The latter was very much pleased and honoured him with presents. The king saw the horses and was greatly impressed with their form and quality. The riders displayed the mettle of the horses for a short while, exhibiting before the king their various gaits. The king ascertained who the leader of the party was and on seeing the leader, who was the LORD HIMSELF, the king forgot the context for a moment and instinctively rose from his seat in obeisance. He soon checked himself and was wondering what made him do obeisance to the rider. The leader explained to the king that in horse trade, the main principle was that, the moment the horses were accepted by the purchaser, the transaction would end and there could be no dispute between him and the seller whatever might happen after the acceptance. The leader also explained to the king the features and qualities of the various types of horses, their different colours, the various marks, good and bad, which might be found on their bodies and their effect on the owner etc., The horses were then accepted by the king and they were taken to the stables. The king presented a silk apparel to

the leader which HE accepted in all humility. Presents were also given to the other riders. The Lord and the others, who formed the party of riders, then left the palace.

60. RIVER MADE BIGGER

That night, soon after the moon rose at mid-night the horses became jackals. They broke their tether and bit the old horses which were also tethered in the same stables. Then they ran helter skelter howling aloud. They entered the city and caused a lot of havoc eating sheep, fowls and pet animals reared by the citizens and entering houses and damaging property.

The stable keepers were unable to do anything in this unusual situation. They informed the king about the occurrence. The king was enraged on hearing what they had told him. Maanikkavaachakar, who did not know anything about all this, came to the king as usual. The king informed him about the transformation of the horses into jackals and then asked his men to chastise Maanikkavaachakar once again. The king's men placed big stones on his head and his two hands and made him stand exposed to the mid-day sun with the face and eye upturned so as to bear the brunt of the glare of the sun. Maanikkavaachakar couldn't do anything but pray unto Lord Somasundareswara.

The Lord caused the river Valgai to rise in unprecedented floods. The flood waters entered the city and caused considerable damage to life and property. The citizens were frightened. The guards, who were chastising Maanikkavaachakar, (in their anxiety to save

their kith and kin and their property), went to their houses leaving him alone. Maanikkavaachakar immediately went to the temple and prayed unto Lord Somasundareswara.

61. CARRIED MUD FOR PANCAKES

The king directed his ministers to take steps to control the flood in the Vaigai. The ministers announced that each house-holder in the city should contribute labour for strengthening the flooded bank in a portion marked for him. Accordingly, a large number of labourers gathered at the flooded site with baskets, spades and other relevant articles, work proceeded apace and was almost finished.

One of the householders was an old woman called Vandhi. She had no dependants. She earned her livelihood selling cakes made of rice flour. But she was a great devotee of Lord Somasundareswara and she never failed to mentally offer the cakes made by her to the Lord before the commencement of the sales. She was in search of a labourer to be sent as her representative. The Lord begged her to give in advance the bits of the cakes strewn about in the container saying that HE was hungry and tired and if He ate those bits, HE would be resuscitated and be able to do hard work. She gave Him the bits and the Lord ate them with relish. Then, thanking her for it, He proceeded to the site.

But He did not do any serious work. He would carry sand in the basket and then empty the basket to no purpose. Now and then, He was lying down. He also

them and then returned to the site. Again He was playing pranks without doing the allotted work. The king's officials were checking the work done by the house holders and noticed that except Vandhi's portion, the work assigned had been completed.

The officials reported the matter to the king. He was enraged and demanded to know who was responsible for the portion which remained incomplete. The Lord was produced before the king. He struck him with his golden cane and the Lords dropped a basket of sand on the breached site and vanished. The sand thrown by the Lord, to the surprise of all, rose to be a big mount and the breach was completely closed. The stroke received by the Lord was felt by the entire Universe including the king. The king was wonder-struck at this and wanted to meet Vandhi. But a celestial Vimana came to her and took her to Siva Loka.

The Lord appeared to the king and said that Maanikkavaachakar had spent the money entrusted to him on the Lord and his devotee, that the king chastised him not knowing what had been done by him and that, therefore, He had caused the river Vaigai to rise in floods. The Lord also said that the blessed Vandhi who had lovingly fed Him with the cakes prepared by her was elevated to Siva Loka. Maanikkavaachakar's, the Lord said, was an enlightened soul and he should, therefore, be left to live according to his inclinations. The king was blessed by the Lord with long life and great prosperity. The Lord then disappeared.

The king profusely regretted to Maanikkavaachakar for the wrongs done to him not knowing his greatness. Maanikkavaachakar blessed the king and said that, according to the injunctions of the

Lords, he wanted to go to Chindambaram and took leave of the king. He then went to the temple, prayed to Lord Somasundareswara in Madurai and left for Chidambaram. The king also prayed to Lord Somasundareswara in the temple and profusely apologised for his ignorance. The king then placed Sabhanaathan on the throne.

Maanikkavaachakar then reached Chidambaram after worshipping Lord Siva in several shrines en-route. At Chidambaram, he sang Thiruvaachakam in praise of the Lord and was doing penance in a forest nearby.

At that time, a group of Buddhists came to Chidambaram and challenged Hindusim and SAIVITE Philosophy. The worshippers of the Lord of Chidambaram called "THE THOUSANDS OF THILLAI" (who had dedicated themselves to the service of the Lord) accepted the challenge and discussions went on for some days. The Lord then appeared in the dream of His devotees and asked them to get Maanikkavaachakar as their spokesman for the discussions with the Buddhists. Maanikkavaachakar then took the lead and made the Buddhists admit their defeat.

Then the Chola king, who was a staunch Buddhist and had a dumb daughter, came to Chidambaram and said that, whoever cured his daughter of her dumbness would be accepted by him as the winner. The Buddhist failed to cure her but Maanikkavaachakar instantly cured her with Lord's grace. The Chola became a saivite and meted out punishment to the Buddhists as agreed before by them at the beginning of the contest.

Maanikkavaachakar, after visiting some other places and worshipping the Lord there, returned to Chidambaram and entered Siva Loka.

62. CURED THE FEVER AND HUNCH

BACK OF KOONPANDYA

Ten generations after Sabhanantha Pandya, Koon Pandya ruled the Pandyan Kingdom. He defeated the Chera and Chola kings and ruled all their kingdoms as the supreme Lord. The Chola king gave his daughter, Mangayarkarasi in marriage to Koon-Pandya and also offered several presents to the bridegroom. He also sent Kulachiraiyar, a man of noble birth and great erudition with him. The Pandya was impressed by the sterling qualities of Kulachiraiyar and made him the Prime Minister.

The king gave up his belief in Saivism unmindful of the fact that all his ancestors had sworn by it and Lord Somasundareswar of Madurai had come to their rescue in difficult situations and on innumerable occasions. He came under the influence of Jainism but the Queen and the Prime Minister continued to follow Saivism though they could not exhibit their leanings in public. They prayed to Lord Somasundareswara to wean the king away from his new faith and make him return to the old and time-honoured one.

At that time, a Saivaite pilgrim came to Madurai from Chidambaram to worship Lord Somasundareswara. He told the queen and the Prime Minister that in Sirkhazhi in Thanjavur District, a Brahmin named Sivapadha Hrudayar had a son named Thirugnaana Sambanthar, who, in his third year, was fed by Goddess Parvathi with her milk, with the result that he had been

endowed with the supreme knowledge. He toured round many places singing the praise of Lord Siva. Lord Siva also had endowed him with several unusual presents such as a pair of golden Symbols for keeping time while singing, a pearl bedecked palanquin, a pearl canopy, gold coins to ward off famine etc., He also performed various miracles such as bringing life to dead men and women.

When they heard all these, a ray of hope dawned on the minds of the queen and the Prime Minister. They had sent a messenger to Thirugnanasambandhar imploring him to visit Madurai to drive out Jainism and revive Saivism. On receipt of the invitation, Thirugnanasambandhar wanted to proceed to Madurai. But his colleague, Thirunavukkarasar, who had been a pillar of Jainism, tried to stop him on the plea that the king there could be cruel and heartless. But Thirugnanasambandhar brushed aside the objection saying that Lord Siva's devotees could never be harmed and went to Madurai along with a multitude of his followers.

At Madurai, he worshipped Goddess Meenakshi and Lord Somasundareswara and prayed for success in his encounter with the leaders of the Jain cult.

He stayed in the building of one Vaageesa, an ardent devotee of the Lord. That night, the Jain performed an Abhichara Homa for the destruction of the building in which Thirugnanasambandhar was staying by means of raising a fire in it. The building was afire and Thirugnanasambandhar directed the fire to consume the Pandya king who had forsaken his ancestral belief and was hobnobbing with a new sect. The Pandya was immediately afflicted with a burning fever and his agony

was unbearable. No medicines could cure him. The queen sent for the Prime Minister who told the king that the young Thirugnanasambandhar, a saivite savant who was staying in Madurai, could alone cure the illness of the king. The king agreed out of the exigencies of the situation though he was loth to seek the aid of a staunch Saivite. The queen and the Prime Minister went to the place where Thirugnanasambandhar was staying and requested him to cure the illness of the king and hereby wean him away from Jainism. Thirugnanasambandhar went with the queen and the Prime Minister to the king. The Jain leaders who were already given a chance had failed to cure the king of his illness. Thirugnanasambandhar then tried his hand. He got some ash from the kitchen of Lord Somasundareswara's temple and applied it to the right side of the king's body with a prayer song. Instantaneously the fever on the right side subsided. The king, therefore, requested Thirugnanasambandhar to cure his left side also and on the application of the ash on the left the fever subsided.

The Pandya, therefore, assumed the name of Soundra Pandya and embraced Saivism. He honoured Thirugnanasambandhar.

63. MADE GNANASAMBANDHAR KILL THE NAKED ONE ON THE SULA

The Queen and the Prime Minister then requested Thirugnaanasambandhar to eliminate Jainism from the country. He wanted to know the Lord's will. The Lord announced His approval and asked him to go to the king and in his presence challenge the Jains for a

debate on the relative merits of the two religions. The queen and Prime Minister then persuaded the king to arrange for the meet.

The relation of the Jain mocked at their inability to prevail over a Saivite child. They were, therefore, inclined to enter into a debate with Thirugnanasambandhar but their relatives advised them not to do so. They recounted certain bad dreams which they had about the Jains being executed by the king. Notwithstanding these warnings, they took up the challenge of Thirugnaanasambandhar and took part in the debate.

The Jains suggested that the representative tenets of the two sects be written on palm leaves and be put into fire. The leaf which would remain unburnt should be accepted as that of the winning creed. They also suggested that this should be done outside the city so that Lord Somasundareswara's influence would not prevail. The suggestions were accepted. The leaves put by the Jains were consumed by the fire but those put by Thirugnanasambandhar were intact.

The Jains then suggested another test. The leaves should be put into the river Vaigai and the leaf which went up stream would indicate the winning creed. It was also agreed that the votaries of the defeated creed should be executed. This test also ended in favour of Thirugnanasambandhar. The leaders of the defeated Jain sect were executed, except thosoe who embraced Saivism.

The king wanted to know what had happened to the leaves which went upstream. So, they all went up the river and found that at the tenth mile the leaves had

disappeared. Then Thirugnaanasambandhar prayed unto the Lord and there appeared under a Bilva tree a Swayambu (self-created) Linga. From that Linga, the Lord appeared in the form of an old person and gave the leaves to Thirugnaanasambandhar. The king was greatly impressed, and he built a temple for the Linga and the place came to be called "Thiruvedakum (The place where the sacred leaves were found).

Thirugnaanasambandhar remained in Madurai for some time and then left for Chola kingdom after worshipping Lord Siva in various shrines in Pandya territory enroute.

64. BROUGHT TREE, TANK, SIVALINGA ETC., TO MADURAI AS WITNESS

There was a rich merchant in a coastal town. For a long time, he had no offsprings. He, therefore, spent much on charity. Then he begot a daughter. He had a nephew (sister's son) in Madurai. Though he was already married, the merchant desired to give his daughter in marriage to his nephew as his second wife and told all his relatives of his desire.

The merchant and his wife died suddenly. Their relatives performed the funeral obsequies and sent a message to the nephew in Madurai to inform him of the death of the merchant and his wife. They also informed him of the intention of the merchant to give his daughter in marriage to the nephew and asked him to come over to the place, marry the daughter and take the properties of the merchant. The nephew was grief-stricken on this. He went to his uncle's place with a few relatives of his,

stayed for some time and took the daughter and properties of the merchant saying that he would marry her at Madurai in the presence of all his relatives. Enroute, he reached a place called Thiruppurambayam where he wanted to stay for the night. He took his bath in a well near the temple, and ate his food and slept on the ground. A poisonous snake bit him and he died. The relatives who were accompanying him were beating their breasts on account of the grief over his death. The merchant's daughter, who was young, was perplexed at the turn of events and swooned. The relatives consoled her.

Thirugnanasambandar was staying in a building nearby and he came to the spot on hearing the mourning cries of the girl. He brought the dead man back to life. The bereaved girl became happy.

Thirugnanasambandhar noticed that the girl, though betrothed to her cousin, did not touch his body either when he was lying dead or when he was brought back to life. He told the merchant's nephew that she was a girl of excellent qualities and he should marry her then and there. But the nephew pointed that it would be difficult for him to marry the girl except in the presence of the members of his clan who would bear witness. Thirugnanasambandhar however, said that the widely expressed intention of the girl's father was to give her in marriage to him. Further, the tree, the well and the Linga in that spot would also bear witness to the marriage. Therefore he advised that the marriage should take place immediately. After the marriage, the party went to Madurai and

In due course, he got several children through his two wives. Once, on account of a quarrel which arose among the children, the elder wife scoffed at the younger and said that she was not lawfully wedded wife. The younger wife explained the circumstances under which her marriage took place and told her that the tree, the well and Linga were witnesses to the marriage. The elder wife further ridiculed the younger wife about the inanimate objects cited as witnesses to the marriage.

The younger wife then went to the temple, bathed in the Golden Lotus Tank and prayed unto Lord Somasundareswara to summon the tree, the well and the Linga to Madurai to convince the elder wife of the sanctity and legality of the marriage. Immediately the three witnesses appeared in the north-eastern part of the temple. The younger wife showed them to the elder wife. This evoked the wonder and admiration of the entire population of the city but the elder wife was unhappy about it. She was looked down upon by all people. Her husband also said that he would disown her but the younger wife dissuaded him from doing so, saying that she (the elder wife) was like a mother to her. The two wives and their children lived thereafter in perfect harmony.

65. SUPPLICATION

St. Agastya thus completed the narration of the sixty four sportly acts of Lord Somasundareswara of Madurai and then meditated on the Lord. Then he invited

all the Saints, Rishis to visit Madurai and worship Lord Somasundareswara. They all bathed in the Ganges and worshipped Lord Visveswara of Varanaasi. Then they all flew up in the sky to reach Madurai. Enroute, St. Agastya pointed out to them the various shrines the passed by bathed in the Golden Lotus Tank and worshipped Lord Somasundareswara. The Lord was pleased and came out of the Linga and blessed them. To Agastya, the Lord said that the (Agastya) and his wife were respectively equal to Lord Siva and Parvathi. Agastya and other Rishis then installed a Linga each and established a 'Tapovanam' nearby and worshipped Lord Somasundareswara and Goddess Meenakshi thrice every day.

பின்னிணைப்பு

திருவிளையாடல் கருப்பொருள் வெண்பா

1. இந்திரன் பழி தீர்த்த படலம்

விச்சுவனை மாய்த்து விருத்திரனை வீட்டுபழி
கச்சையோற் சுற்றக் கருத்தழிந்து - துச்சுவன
னேற்றிக் கடம்பவனத் தொட்டாணை மீதரனைப்
போற்றிப் பழியற்றான் போந்து.

2. வெள்ளை யானை சாபந் தீர்த்த படலம்

சம்புவணி யம்புயத்தைச் சார்ந்தடையுந் தூர்வாச
னும்பர்பதிக் கீயவவ னுரர்ந்து வரு - மும் பலகைத்
தேய்க்கமுனி சாபத்தாற் றென் மதுரை நம்பனைநீர்
தோய்க்கவருள் பெற்றதுகான் றோல்.

3. திருநகரங் கண்ட படலம்

வாணிகனுஞ் சங்கரனும் வந்துகுல சேகரன்பா
லேணிசெய்க டம்பவன மென்றுரைக்கப் - பேணிமதி
சிந்தமிர்தத் தான்மதுரை செய்துமகப் பெற்றடைந்தான்
பந்தமறுத் தாதி பதம்.

4. தடாதகைப் பிராட்டியார் திருவவதாரப் படலம்

பண்டை யருட்படியே பார்வதிமூ வாண்டுசூயங்
கொண்டுமலை யத்துவசன் கோமகத்தி - லுண்டாய்ப்பின்
கோலோச்சி னாண்மதுரை கூறுகன்னி நாடாக
மாலோச்சி விண்ணுற்றான் மன்.

5. தடாதகைப் பிராட்டியார் திருமணப் படலம்

திக்குவிச யஞ்செய்து செக்காணை வெல்லவரன்
பக்கமுற முன்சேர் பறம்பேக - நக்கனெழிற்
கன்னி தனைமணந்து கன்னிநகர் சுந்தரனென்
மன்னவனா யாண்டான் மகிழ்ந்து.

6. வெள்ளியம்பலத் திருக்கூத்தாடிய படலம்

செய்ய பதஞ்சலியும் சீரார் புலிமுனியு
முய்ய நடமன்ன முண்ணவே - யையனவர்
காண நடித்தான் கடிமணத்தின் மற்றவரும்
பேண மதுரையினிற் பின்.

7. குண்டோதரனுக் கன்னமிட்ட படலம்

ஊண்விஞ் சியதென் றுமைதருக்கிச் சென்றுரைப்பச்
சேண்விஞ் சியலுண் சிகரத்தை - நாண்விஞ்சக்
குண்டோ தரனாற் குறைப்பித்தான் கூடலினிற்
கண்டோர்க் ளஞ்சித் திகைத்து.

8. அன்னக்குழியும் வையையு மழைத்த படலம்

நாணியம் மைமுன்னிற்க நாயகன்குண் டோதரற்கே
பூணியலுன் டேநீர்க்கா வோடவரன் - சேணியகங்
கைவிடுக்க வாய்விடுத்தான் கைகொட்டி முன்குதித்தா
னைவிடுக்கக் கூடலினி னன்கு.

9. எழுகடலழைத்த படலம்

காஞ்சனையாள் கோதமரின் கட்டுரையா னீர்படியும்
வாஞ்சையினைப் பூஞ்சிகையாள் வந்துரைக்க - நாஞ்சிலம
ராலவாய்ச் சொக்கனே ழைத் தியையு மங்கீந்தா

10. மலையத்துவசனை யழைத்த படலம்

தன்னம்வால் பற்றி யுவர் தான்மூழ்கீ வற்றதெனு
அன்னைமகி ழுக்கூட லாதிபரன் - பொன்னுலகில்
வாழுமலை யத்துவசன் வந்தடையச் செய்திருவோ
ரேமுகடன் மூழ்குவித்தா னிங்கு.

11. உக்கிரபாண்டியன் றிருவவதாரப் படலம்

ஆனை யுரியானு மம்பிகையுந் தாமகிழ
வேனைவிண் ணோர்களுமே யேமமுறத் தானையுடன்
சூரனை யன்றட்டுத் தொன்மதுரை யுக்கிரம
வீரனாய் வந்துதித்தான் வேள்.

12. உக்கிர குமாரனுக்கு வேல் வளை செண்டு கொடுத்த படலம்

வேலைமக வான்மேரு வேல்வளைசெண் டால்வெல்ல
வேலையுடை யாற்களித்து விண்ணுற்றான் - சேலலைகட்
காந்திமதித் தாய்க்குங் கவின்மதுரை யுக்கிரற்கு
மேய்ந்தமணங் கண்டா னினிது.

13. கடல் சுவற வேல் விட்ட படலம்

போகியழைத் தேவப் புனற்கரசன் றென்மதுரைப்
போகி யொலிக்கப் பொருவழுதி - யேகியலிர்
வேலாற் கடல் சுவற வேசெய்து வீழ்ந்தெழுந்தா
னாலால முண்டா னடி.

14. இந்திரன் முடிமேல் வளையெறிந்த படலம்

முத்தமிழோ னால்விண்சென் மூவிறையு ளிந்திரனின்
கொத்தவிழ்தார் தாங்கிக் குயினான்கை - வித்தகனு
மிட்டான் சிறையிலெதி ரிந்திரன்நன் மேல்வளையை

15. மேருவைச் செண்டாலடித்த படலம்

பஞ்சத்தாற் பஞ்சவனும் பாண்டரங்கள் சொற்படியே
யஞ்செண்டான் மேருவினை யின்றித்து - விஞ்சுதனம்
பெற்றான் மகவீன்றான் பேழ்மதுரை நம்பனடி
யுற்றா னரசாண் டுவந்து.

16. வேதத்திற்குப் பொருள் அருளிச் செய்த படலம்

மாமறையின் மெய்ப் பொருளை மண்கண்ணுவர் முதலாந்
தூமுனிவ ரோராது துன்புறுங்காற் - பூமதுரைத்
தற்பரனத் தூ யோர்க டாம்கிழத் தோன்றியுயரைத்
தற்புதமா யேமறைந்தா னாங்கு.

17. மாணிக்கம் விற்ற படலம்

வீரன்று கால்வீய வீறுமுடி சூடமணி
சோரர் கொளவமைச்சர் சோர்வறுங்காற் - சீர்மதுரை
மாதவன்வ லாரியுடன் மாணிக்கந் தந்ததன்சீ
ரோதிமறைந் தானாண்டா னுய்ந்து.

18. வருணன் விட்ட கடலை வற்றச் செய்த படலம்

வருணனும் மர்லால் வயிறுவலி தீர்ப்பான்
குரவையினை யேவவது கடற் - பெருகிவரக்
கண்டா னபிடேகன் கார்நான்கா லாலா
முண்டானுண் பித்தா னுவந்து.

19. நான்மாடக் கூடலான படலம்

நான்மூன்று செல்லேவ நாணிக்ரு ணன் மதுரை
தான்மூழ்கத் தென்னவனுந் தாபமுற - வான்முடியி
னான்மாட நான் முகிலா னன்கமைத்தா னன்னுமு
னான்மாடக் கூடலந்த நாடு.

20. எல்லாம் வல்ல சித்தரான படலம்

எல்லாமா யல்லவாமா யெய்துசிவன் கூடலிடை
யெல்லாமாய் வல்லசித்த னென்றெய்தி - யெல்லாருங்
காணப் பலவாடல் காட்டினான் மாலயற்கு
மாண வளர்ந்தான் மகிழ்ந்து.

21. கல்லாணைக்குக் கரும்பருத்திய படலம்

இச்சித்தன் செய்கையினை யின்றறிவா மென்றவிறை
மச்சறவே நோக்கி மருளோட்டி - யச்சறவான்
கல்லாணைக் கங்கு கரும்பருத்தி னான்மதுரை
யல்லாருங் கண்டத் தரன்.

22. யானையெய்த படலம்

மால்பணியாற் சாவகர்செய் மாவேள்வி தோன்றியமா
மால்பனிக்கக் கூடன் மருவதழும் - வேல்வழுதி
சிந்தா குலமுற்றான் சேவகனாய்ச் சென்றழித்தா
னிந்தார் சடிலத் திறை.

23. விருத்தகுமார பாலரான படலம்

மாதவன் வைணவத்து மாணிக்குக் கௌரியினை
வேத விதிப்படியே வேட்பிக்க - நீதமிலாச்
சுற்றத்தார் மெய்ச்சிடமூத் தோன்குமரன் சேயானான்
பெற்றத்தாற் கூடற் பிரான்.

24. கான்மாறியாடிய படலம்

செய்ய பரதந் தெரிராஜ சேகரனம்
மைய னடங்கண் டகங்குழைந்து - மையணிந்த
வத்தனே கான் மாறி யாடுமென வாடினான்
சித்தனாங் கூடற் சிவன்.

25. பழியஞ்சின படலம்

வேதிய னில்வீட்டோன் வேடனோ வென்றறியா
தாதி யடிபணிய வாலவாய்ச் - சோதியிறை
சங்கை யொழித் தான்வணிகன் றன்வதுவை யாமிடத்தில்
அங்கைகுவித் தேற்றவினி தாய்ந்து.

26. மரபாதகந் தீர்த்த படலம்

தாதைதனைக் கொன்றேதன் றாயைப் புணர்ந்த கொடும்
பாதகனுங் கூடற் பதியடைந்து - சோதிபதம்
போற்றித் தனதுவினை போக்கினா னெத்தலத்தும்
ஏற்றம் மதுரையினி லேது.

27. அங்கம் வெட்டின படலம்

ஆசானை வஞ்சித் தவன்மனையைக் கைப்பிடிப்பான்
ஆசான செய்கை யவன் செயலுந் - தேசாய்ப்
பொலிந்தானச் சித்தனையே பொன்றுவித்தா னன்பரன்
மலிந்தானவ் வாளான் மலைந்து.

28. நாகமெய்த படலம்

அனந்தகுணன் றென்மதுரை யாண்டுவரும் நாளிற்
சினந்தகியா யோரகரன் சேரச் - சினந்தவனாய்
ஏற்றி யமணேங்க இந்தமுதா னஞ்சொழித்து
வெற்றி யுடனிருந்தான் வேந்து.

29. மாயப்பசுவை வதைத்த படலம்

வீர வனந்தருண வேந்தமணர் விட்டபசு
சார மதுரையினைத் தான்சேர - ஈரமதி
ஆறணிந்தான் காத்தா னருங்கயிலை காக்கும்
வீறணிந்த நந்தியினை விட்டு.

30. மெய்க் காட்டிட்ட படலம்

தானை மிகக் கொணர்வான் சாமந்தன் பெற்றபொருள்
யானை யுரிபோர்த்த வாலாவாய்க்- கோணர்க்கே
தந்தா னிறைவருத்தத் தானிரக்கத் தானையுடன்
வந்தான்பின் சென்றான் மறைந்து.

31. உலவாக் கிழியருளிய படலம்

வீறுகுல பூடணமன் வேதியரைத் தானிகழத்
தூறுமழை யில்லாது சோர்வுறுங்கால் - ஆறுபுனைச்
செஞ்சடையான் றென்மதுரைத் தேவுல வாக்கிழியாற்
பஞ்சவனைக் காத்தான் பரிந்து.

32. வளையல் விற்ப படலம்

செந்தாரு காவனத்தார் தேவியர்கள் கற்பிழந்து
வந்தார் வணிககுல மங்கையராய்- இந்தாரும்
சென்னியான் றென்கூடற் றேவளையால் கையிலிட்ட
கன்னியரைக் காத்தான் கசிந்து.

33. அட்டமா சித்தி உபதேசித்த படலம்

ஆசாற்குப் பால்கொடுத்த வாரியக்க மாதர்களும்
ஆசார் கருங்கல்லா யாலமர- மேசார
அத்தியுரி மேற்போர்த்த வாலாவாய்ச் சொக்கனட்ட
சித்தியுப தேசித்தான் சேர்ந்து.

34. விடையிலச்சினையிட்ட படலம்

சென்னிக் கருள்புரிவான் றென்மதுரைச் சொக்கேசன்
மன்னுவட வாயில் வரவிடுத்துப்- பின்னருளால்
இட்டான் விடைக்குறியை யிஃதோர்ந்தான் சேய்க்குப்பின்

35. தண்ணீர்ப் பந்தல் வைத்த படலம்

சென்னியிரா சேந்திரற்குச் செல்வத் திருமகளை
உன்னு மணஞ்செய்வா னுவந்திசைந்து - பின்னவற்குத்
தந்தா ணமர்வினைய தார்ச்செழியன் சேனையுளார்
உயந்தார் அரன்கொடுநீ ருண்டு.

36. இரசவாதஞ் செய்த படலம்

பொன்னனையாள் பூவணர்தம் பொற்புருவைக் காண வெண்ணி
இன்னமுதம் அன்பர்க் கிடுநாளி - லன்னவட்குச்
சித்தானா யெய்தித் திருநீற்றாற் பொன்னீந்தான்
அத்தனாங் கூட லரன்.

37. சோழனை மடுவில வீட்டிய படலம்

தென்மதுரைக் கோமகற்குஞ் சென்னிக்கும் போர்வினைய
முன்னவனும் வேடனாய் முன்னுற்றுப் - பின்மறையக்
காய்ந்துவர வீழ்ந்தெழுந்தான் கௌரியன் செப்பியனோ
வீந்தான் மடுவினிலே வீழ்ந்து.

38. உலவாக் கோட்டை யருளிய படலம்

கூடலுறை வேளாண் குடிப்பிறந்தா னன்பர்தமை
நாடியமு திட்டுவர நல்குரவால் - வாடியபோ
தாதியுல வாக்கோட்டை யாங்கீய வுணளித்துச்
சோதியுல குற்றான் றுதித்து.

39. மாமனாக வந்து வழக்குரைத்த படலம்

செல்வத் தனபதியுஞ் செல்ல மருமகற்குச்
செல்வங் கொடுத்தரணி செல்லவே - வல்வழக்கிற்
றாயத்தார் கொண்டதைத்தாய் சாற்றவளித் தானால்

40. வாகுணனுக்குச் சிவலோகங் காட்டிய படலம்

வேதியன் வீய விடைமருதூர் சென்றத்தி
நீதி வரகுணனு நீங்கினனா - யாதி
சிவ லோகங் கண்டு திருவருளைப் பெற்றா
வைமோச்சித் தென்மதுரை யாண்டு.

41. விறகு விறற் படலம்

பத்திரனைக் காப்பான் பரிந்துவிற காளாகிச்
சத்துருவைச் சாதாரி தானிசைத்து- நந்தமதி
லோட்டினா னன்பருள மோங்கிய சிற்சபையி
னாட்டினான் கூட லரன்.

42. திருமுகங் கொடுத்த படலம்

சீரார் மதிமலியென் செய்யதிருப் பாசுரத்தர
னாராரும் பாணனுக்கு நாறுபனந் - தாரா
னிதியமிக வீந்துமிடி நீக்கினான் கூடற்
பதியமரு மேழைப் பரன்.

43. பலகையிட்ட படலம்

செய்யதிருப் பாணன் றிருச்செவியிற் காளலிசை
பெய்யவரன் கன்மாரி பெய்வித்தும்- மெய்யன்பன்
பாடினா னன்றும் பரிந்தளித்தான் கூடலம
ரீடிலான் பொற்பலகை யீந்து.

44. இசைவாது வென்ற படலம்

பாட்டிசையால் வெல்வதற்குப் பாணன்மனை தானீழ
நாட்டில்வரு பாடினியை நச்சுடைய - குட்டரவம்
பூண்டான் பரிந்த ளித்தான் பொன்மதுரைச் சுந்தரனா
யாண்டா னசரீரி யாய்.

45. பன்றிக் குட்டிக்கு முலைகொடுத்த படலம்

மன்ராஜ ராஜனுமே மாமதுரை யாளுகையிற்
பன்னுதவன் சாயத்தாற் பன்றியாய்ப் - பன்னிருவர்
பால்தாய் மாயத்தாய்ப் பன்றியுருக் கொண்டு சிவன்
பால்ந்து காத்தான் பரிந்து.

46. பன்றிக் குட்டிகளை மந்திரிகளாக்கிய படலம்

பன்றி முகம்படைத்த பன்னிருவே ளாளரையு
மன்று வழிதி யமைச்சாக்கிப் பின்றைத்
தனதுபத மீந்தளித்தான் றன்மதுரை வீறு
மெனதுனதென் றில்லா விறை.

47. கரிக்குருவிக்கு உபதேசம் செய்த படலம்

மங்காச் சிவ வேடம் மாதவனின் சொற்கேட்டுக்
கங்காளற் போற்றக் கரிக்குருவி -யங்கால
வாயடைந்து தாழ வலியனெனும் போந்தான்
பேயடைந்த காட்டுப் பிரான்.

48. நாரைக்கு முத்தி கொடுத்த படலம்

வென்றிச் சுருணன் வியன்மதுரை மீச்சிறப்பை
யன்று தவமுனிவ ரங்கறைய நன்றிதெனக்
கேட்டுநரை சென்றேத்தக் கேட்டவரந் தானளித்தான்
மாட்டுநரை யுள்ளான் மகிழ்ந்து.

49. திருவாலவாயான படலம்

பொங்கும் பெருங்கீர்த்திப் பூடணனாள் சிந்துலகைப்
பொங்கி யழிக்கப் புதுப்பித்தான் -வங்கிய
சேகரற்குச் சித்தனாய்த் தென்மதுரை யெல்லையைக் கைந்
நாகத்தாற் காட்டினா னன்கு.

50. சுந்தரப் பேரம் பெய்த படலம்

சென்னி யமார்க்கெழுந்த செய்தியினைத் தென்னவன் கேட்
டுன்னி யுடனடுங்கி யுள்ளழுங்கத் -தென்மதுரைச்
சுந்தரனும் வேடுவனாய்த் தோற்றித்தான் மால்படையைச்
சுந்தரப்பே ரம்பு தொடுத்து.

51. சங்கப் பலகை தந்த படலம்

நாமகளு மாறெட்டு நற்புலவ ராய்மதுரைக்
காமனடு கண்ணுதலைக் கண்டேத்தி- வாமமுடை
நற்பலகை பெற் றதன்மே னக்கனுட னேழேழாஞ்
சொற்புலவ ராயிருந்தார் சூழ்ந்து.

52. தருமிக்குப் பொற்கிழி யளித்த படலம்

கொங்குதேர் வாழ்க்கையெனக் கூறுதிருப் பாகரத்தா
லங்கு தருமிக் கருள்புரிவான் - சங்கப்
புலவரிடஞ் சென்றெதர்த்தான் போதமிலாச் சீரன்
சலமதனில் வீழ்ந்தான் றகித்து.

53. கீரனைக் கரையேற்றிய படலம்

வீழ்ந்துகண் டேனை வியன்புலவர் துன்புற்றுத்
தாழ்ந்த மனத்தினராய்த் தாந்துதிக்கச் -சூழ்ந்தசடைச்
சம்பிரங்கிக் கீரனையுந் தான்கரையி லேற்றுவித்தான்
வம்பமருங் கூந்தலொடு வந்து.

54. கீரனுக்கிலக்கண முபதேசித்த படலம்

ஏற்றி யவன்பா வினிதிற் செவிமடுத்துத்
தேற்று வகையெண்ணித் தேன்பொதிகை- வீற்றருளு
மம்முனியாற் கீரற்கருந் தமிழைப் போதித்தா

55. சங்கத்தார் கலகந் தீர்த்த படலம்

சங்கப் புலவர்களுக்குச் சண்பகம் னாள் கையினிற்
றங்கடங்கள் செய்யுளையே தாந்துதிக்கச் - சங்கரனோர்
மூங்கையினான் மூவர் முதிர் புலமை காண்பித்தா
னோ கையினா லுய்யலவ ரோர்ந்து.

56. இடைக்காடன் பிணக்குத் தீர்த்த படலம்

இடைக்காடன் பாவை யிகழ்ந்ததனாற் சொக்கன்
வடவால வாய்ச்சேர வந்தித் - துடனடுங்கித்
தாழ்ந்தா னருள்பெற்றான் சங்கப் புலவரடி
வீழ்ந்தான் குலேசனெனும் வேந்தன்.

57. வலை வீசின படலம்

கந்தன் குணியாயுங் கௌரி வலை மாதாயு
நந்திகறா மீனாயு நண்ணவே-வந்தருளி
மீன்பிடித்து வேட்டுமையை மீண்டான் மதுரைநகர்
தேன்பிடித்த கொன்றைச் சிவன்.

58. வாதவூரடிகளுக்கு உபதேசித்த படலம்

தேசமிகக் கொண்டு திருவாத வூரடிக
டுசபெற வானுறையிற் றுன்னியுப - தேசமுற
வன்பர்க்களித்தா வணிகேரு மாவென்றா
ரின்புற்றான் கூட விறை

59. நரி பரியாக்கிய படலம்

வரு மென்ற நாட்கழிய வைகைத் துறைவன்
றிருவாத வூர்தமைச் சீறி-வருத்த
நரியைப் பரியாக்கி நல்கினனாற் சொக்க
னரிமர்த்த னோகையுற வன்று.

60. பரி நரியாக்கிய படலம்

நல்கும் பரிக்ணரியாகிக் கானிரவிற்
புல்க வெகுண்டு புரவலனு-மொல்கிமன
முச்சி வெயினிறுத்த ஓழிநீர் போற்கங்கை
யச்சமுறச் சென்றதவ னார்த்து.

61. மண் சுமந்த படலம்

ஆற்றுவரும் வெள்ள மணையிடுவா லாரார்க்குச்
சாற்றுவுசி தன்வந்தி தான்சோரத்-தோற்றியரன்
பிட்டுக்கு மண்சுமந்தான் பின்படியும் பட்டான்மன்
கொட்டிமறைந் தானடைத்தான் கூறு.

62. பாண்டியன் சுரந்தீர்த்த படலம்

சீரார் குலச்சிறையார் செய்ய திருமுகத்தைப்
பாரா மதுரை பரிந்தடைந்து தேரார்தீ
மன்னேற்றி வெப்புடன்கூன் மாநீற்றா னீக்கினனாற்
றன்னேரில் காழியிறை தான்.

63. சமணரைக் கழுவேற்றிய படலம்

சங்கரியாள் பாலுண்ட சம்பந்தன் றீநீரா
வங்கு சமணரைவென் றானவரை-வெங்கழுவி
லேற்றினா னீற்றொளியை யெங்கும் பரப்பினான்
போற்றியே கூடலுளார் போந்து.

64. வன்னியுங் கிணறு மிலிங்கமு மழைத்த படலம்

நின்வதுவை பொய்யென்று நிந்தித்த மூத்தாண்முன்
வன்னிகுழி லிங்கம் வரவிட்டுத் - தன்வதுவை
மெய்யென்று காட்டினளான் மீமதுரை யுற்றமரு
மையன் றனதருளா லங்கு.

65. அருச்சுனைப் படலம்

இப்படித் தேவாட லெட்டெட்டு முத்தமிழோன்
செய்ய முனிவர்களுஞ் சிந்தை தெளிந்- தப்பன்
பதியெலாஞ் சென்று பரசிவத்தைப் போற்றிக்
கதி பெற்றிருந்தார் களித்து.